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Fiction, English — Collections

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IN MEMORY OF
ROSWELL SKEEL, JR.
AND THEIR FOUR PARENTS

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March, 1908.

Tales from "Blackwood"

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TALES FROM "BLACKWOOD."

LEFT-HANDED ELSA.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

I.

"PATIENCE!" said Elsa.

She was carrying a whole armful of white crockery from the cupboard to the table. But before the word had fairly left her lips, down smashed the whole load upon the brick floor.

"Oh dear!" she exclaimed, "this is too dreadful! The things are bewitched, I think, for all the Herr Pastor may say: only last Sunday the sugar-basin, and the water-jug on Friday; that's the worst of breaking anything on a Friday, it never comes to an end. But those were nothing to this—it's all gone now! Oh Max, it must be true what father

says, and I've got two left hands instead of one; what a scolding I'm in for!"

Max was soon busy among the pieces. Elsa was between laughing over her own awkwardness and crying over her domestic trouble—the humble room looked like one in which the breaking of a coffee-cup might be more serious than the loss of a porcelain vase elsewhere. The table and the few chairs were of the plainest and commonest kind, the stove made no attempt to disguise its natural ugliness, the atmosphere derived its aroma from soap and glue, the tools of a wood-carver lay about, and the only ornaments were a few flowers in the window, two or three sketches nailed against the plaster wall, and the girl herself—Elsa. She was little and dark, and pretty enough, as German girls go—which is not very far—in spite of her poor clothes and the exceedingly hideous style in which she had combed and tied back her thick brown hair. Her style of coiffure had one advantage, however: it left a pair of ear-rings in full sight of all beholders. On the third finger of her left hand she wore a real gold ring. For the rest, and taking her altogether, she was of an age when a girl must be plain indeed not to look more than pretty enough in some man's eyes: and in addition to the beauty of girlhood, she wore that of bright brown eyes and a ready smile.

Perhaps, too, Max may be considered as not wholly unornamental. If not, why should Elsa

have been minding him instead of the crockery? He, too, was young, and though his features were by no means distinguished, his eyes were as dark and as bright as hers, and more intelligent—the eyes of a man who sees with his mind. He need not be further described, because he was considered —at least by Elsa—to be a remarkably handsome young man, and the English reader might not altogether agree with the judgment of a German *bourgeoise*. Let us accept her verdict in a matter that, after all, concerns her more than anybody else in the world. It is enough for us that he looked an honest, straightforward, and good-hearted young fellow, with something inside his skull that was active enough to look out at window and to see something more than a pretty girl. At present, however, there was a cloud upon his brow.

"Yes, Elsa," he said, when he had industriously picked up the last fragment of the last saucer and had placed it on the deal table,—"yes, Elsa: it is all very well to preach Patience, but I *have* been patient—for two whole years. And then, you see, Impatience is apt to take its turn. Never mind the cups and saucers—I'll make that all right with the father; and he is no model of Patience, any way."

"There, then—it's no good crying over spilt milk-jugs. There's one comfort—now there's nothing left to break, I can't break anything more. But

don't go spending your money in buying new things like you did last time—do you hear? That isn't the way to get rich; and you shan't say, Oh, if I had only thought twice before I betrothed myself to a clumsy girl with two left hands! You promise? Then I don't care any more. And you *must* be patient, Max—you must indeed. Why, I'm not nineteen, and you're not twenty-four: before I'm twenty and you're twenty-five you'll have painted your grand picture; and then—and then—if you're not too great and grand to care about Elsa any more, why, we shall have lots of time to get old enough to keep our golden wedding."

"My darling, how can you say such things? If I were an emperor—if I were a Titian—you would be my wife and empress, always and always. Don't you know yet how I love you, Elsa? But it's just that, it is my great love, that makes me impatient, and—afraid."

"Afraid, Max! What of? I assure you *I* don't mean to run away."

"Ah, Elsa, my own darling, you are the dearest girl—but you don't understand these things. If I were a workman like your father; if I lived in one of the great cities where a man has daily chances; if—if—a thousand things,—I should be able to make even your father see that he might give you to me at once without fear. But I can't give up my art, Elsa; that is my nature: it would be like

giving up you. My only hope of getting known in my art is to get this travelling prize that would send me to Rome or Munich——"

"And that would part us, Max."

"Yes—but bring us nearer. Five hundred gulden, Elsa! Well, you know how I have worked for it, how we have hoped for it, how we have made sure of it—for well I knew, and everybody knew, there is no student here who had a chance against me. And now, my darling, just when I felt myself on the point of success, it is dashed from my lips—my cup is broken, yes, just like one of those saucers, Elsa."

She turned pale. "Why, Max, the competition is not for a whole month; what has happened—what can you mean?"

"I mean this, Elsa—that, at the last moment, the man whom we all thought nothing of—Adolf Meyer—has found out how to paint. It is the tortoise and the hare, Elsa—Adolf Meyer is the tortoise, and I, Max Brendel, am the hare. In a month's time I shall be no nearer to you than now, my own little girl, and shall have the reputation of a beaten man."

The colour stole back into her cheeks, while once more the tears in her eyes strove for mastery with a tender smile.

"Then not Patience, Max," she said—"not Patience, but Courage! Who fears a hundred Adolf

Meyers? You have been working too hard, my poor Max, and worrying, as you promised me never to: just as though the clever men who have to decide won't see the difference between him and you! Why, I am not clever; and yet even *I* know whose picture will win the prize!"

"Ah, Elsa, but the judges won't see with your eyes. You haven't seen what Meyer is painting. Elsa, I feel almost as if I could hate him; but his picture—it is glorious: if I don't hate him, it's because his picture makes me hate my own. My darling, if it wasn't for your sake—if it wasn't that the judges might turn out to be fools—I'd go home and thrust my poor Cleopatra into the stove. And if the judges are owls enough to give me the prize, I must say No: praise me for hard work if you like; but the crown of successful work—*that* is for Adolf Meyer."

She knew her lover; and there was something frank and generous in his very confession of jealousy, and in his determination, in spite of it, to be magnanimously just, that touched her. Some women would have said, "You are not the judges; take the award of those who are." Such advice would have been both blameless and natural. She, however, only said—

"You will be the best, though, all the same. But do what is just and right. I will wait for you a thousand years, but will never ask you to do an

unfair thing for me. Only remember, Max, it's just as wrong not to fight bravely as not to fight fair. Don't think of Adolf Meyer any more; do your best, and then see who's the better man. Ah, here's father!" she exclaimed, looking with a sudden return of her childish dismay upon the broken crockery. "Oh Max, Max, to think that a clever man like you should want to marry a girl with two left hands! Is it because you have two right ones, or why?"

II.

After the example of the painter who concealed the face of Agamemnon during the sacrifice of his daughter, let a veil be drawn over the emotions of Herr Frohmann, the journeyman wood-carver and gilder, when he found himself welcomed home by a set-out of broken cups and saucers. He liked Max, and dearly loved his awkward Elsa; but he was tired of her singular talent for breakages, and, as Max had said, he was anything but a model of patience. Moreover, as a good and careful workman, who often had to deal with fragile and delicate materials, he regarded manual clumsiness much as, in another walk of life, he might have regarded mental stupidity. Max Brendel waited to divert as much of the storm as he could to his own broad shoulders, and then said good night to Elsa at the

street door. Her cheeks were wet with her own little troubles, but she gave him her parting words —"Patience and Courage!"—with a loving smile that turned her tears into April rain.

The young man's heart grew full of love. But his love—as it should not have done—made him take an almost morbidly cross view of the sordid, despicable difficulties that stood between him and Elsa. He had not told her their full magnitude; indeed they were of a kind that could not be told by an uneloquent man to an unimaginative girl. All his earnest love of art, all his resolute devotion to it, was embittered by one drop of fatal poison. He was in that condition of life from which Genius alone can soar into glory and the gilding of glory: and the more he toiled, the more assured he became that the divine wings were not his own. He could feel all the beauty that he saw—he could copy it with skilful fidelity; but of original creative power, he owned to himself he had none. His instructors encouraged him, his fellow-students spoke well of him—too well: Elsa believed in him. But there was no living to be made by the brush and pencil in that little town; and in the great world, he knew every art-centre contained minnows that were Tritons to him. He might, he supposed, scrape together, in the course of many years, enough to keep Elsa without giving up his art; but in how many years? and what right had he to make her

waste her youth for him? There was this travelling prize—that would have given him at once a certain position and prestige which would have entitled him to farther aid and patronage — and now this, he knew more surely than he could explain to Elsa, was lost to him. Adolf Meyer, the dark horse, had suddenly developed a long dormant creative power: Adolf Meyer's German Prophetess after the defeat of Varus was as superior to his laboured Cleopatra as cheese to chalk. Meyer had one day mysteriously asked the future prize-student to look at a picture that he was going to enter for the competition, and to tell him whether it was good enough to be beaten without disgrace: Max had gone to patronise, and had been dismayed. It was as much as he could do to refrain from saying, "This will do you harm: by no means send it in." Poor Max! It was like cutting his own throat to say—"Send it in, Adolf: it is better than mine." But he had said so, bravely; and it was while fresh from this act of suicide that he had come to visit Elsa. It may seem a trifle; but a sudden blow like this to one full of eager love and ambition, and with his whole future seemingly set upon a losing die, made him feel half broken-hearted.

Poor Max! and poor Envy! That very unbeautiful passion is not always deserving of very bitter blame.

"Adolf Meyer!" thought Max. "*He* is not in

love. *He* is not poor. *He* doesn't want to marry Elsa. *He* is clever enough to make his own way without aid. *He* doesn't want a travelling prize —it is nothing to him—but it is my all, my only one path to reach my only one ewe lamb. And he never expected the prize: he does not expect it now—his triumph will astonish him while it humiliates me. Why do those who don't want always get, and those who do want always lose? Why, why is a girl like Elsa to suffer just because an Adolf Meyer happens to have been born? Things looked long and black enough before, but to set out in life as a branded failure!—I shall never be able to redeem myself. People will say, Oh, Max Brendel! that's the man who was beaten at some trumpery competition in a country town. I shall be worse off than Sleinitz or even Rothkopf, who won't be branded at all just because nobody ever expected anything from them. I will fall ill—I will have my Cleopatra burnt by accident—I will do anything rather. But then—no, Elsa must not love a man who turns tail and runs away. I doom her to a weary waiting—but she must not wait for a coward. Oh, I would sell my soul to the devil for a quick road to fame and fortune—for one original idea that would cut out the Prophetess and throw Adolf Meyer into the shade!"

Suddenly he felt a heavy hand on his shoulder.

But it was not the devil—it was only his friend and fellow-student, Hans Rothkopf.

"Ha, Max—how wags the world with thee? At play so early? I thought daylight was burnt at both ends over thy Cleopatra. Take care, or I shall beat thee with my Boreas, to which I've only got to put just a—beginning—to make it a wonder of the world. But what thinkest thou, Max? They say that poor dunderhead, Adolf, has caught a craze that he's going to get the prize! No one knows what he's after, but he shuts himself up, locks his door, and daubs away like a madman. I got hold of his old hat this morning, and painted a laurel wreath inside the crown. A good joke, eh?"

"Excellent! He really works, then?"

"I suppose so. We've pumped him for the name of his picture, we have chaffed the very life out of the poor boy; but not a word: he blushes like a girl, tosses up his head, says 'Oh, nothing,' and stalks off with his coat-tails spread out like a peacock's. Sleinitz pinned them together yesterday: a good joke, but not so good as my laurel crown. Yes, there's no doubt that the frog is aping the ox, and that Adolf Meyer is trying to beat Max Brendel and—Hans Rothkopf."

"And nobody has seen his Pr—his picture?"

"Nobody has seen anything, except Sleinitz. Fired by the noble thirst for gratifying curiosity

which is the mark of his noble mind, he looked through the keyhole and saw—Nothing."

"Well, we must all be on our mettle," said Max, with a poor attempt at a smile. "And," he thought to himself, "I won't betray Adolf's secret—he shan't be frightened out of the field by the silly wit of Sleinitzes and Rothkopfs, as he most assuredly would be. No, no, Elsa; you and I fight fair."

But there was no doubt, then, that Meyer was really trying, and that Meyer would win. The Cleopatra was as much out of the field as the Boreas, which had not yet been begun, and never would be.

There was time indeed before the competition to paint another picture to rival the Prophetess. But there was not time, even in a lifetime, for Max Brendel to create a new idea—to enter upon a rivalry, not in workmanship, but in the promise of future greatness, to which the judges would, of course, look first of all. It was singularly careless on the part of the legendary buyer of souls not to take him at his word; for most assuredly if there was ever an honest and honourable soul ripe and ready for buying it was Max Brendel's, and that for the cheap price of an obscure painting prize. No—not for a cheap price, though: for Elsa must be thrown in.

He was seized, before he reached his lodging, with a burning desire to visit the Prophetess once

more, and to see for himself how far Meyer's burst of energy had aided his newly-fledged genius. The Prophetess was like a magnet to him, and drew him as men are always fascinated by what they most hate and fear. Her painter might shrink from the jests of the other students, but it was not likely he would refuse admittance to the generous rival who had encouraged him to enter for the prize. And so it proved.

There were few distinctions in the way of living among the people of the quiet South German town where Max Brendel and Elsa Frohmann had been born. The little knot of art-students, whom poverty and an art-school with some prizes and honourable traditions had gathered there, lived as their fellows live in larger art-centres. They formed a sort of brotherhood in friendship and rivalry, took their pleasures in company, cultivated as much eccentricity as they dared, and looked down upon the *bourgeoisie*. Among them, Max Brendel, owing to a certain unobtrusive strength of purpose, was king; and it speaks well for this rather thoughtless society that the arrival of a young man like Adolf Meyer, who in comparison with the others was actually rich, had made no difference in its allegiance. Indeed, Meyer, just because he carried a purse, was treated as an outsider, an amateur—as one beyond the pale of sympathy; while his sensitiveness, his solitary ways, and his

supposed stupidity marked him out for the butt on all occasions. But Max Brendel was not inclined to despise Meyer for his purse when he ascended the stairs of a house where the rent of a single room would have been a small fortune to him, and knocked at the door which concealed the Prophetess and her creator from prying eyes.

"Who is there?" called out a gentle, almost feminine voice, in a high key.

"I—Max Brendel. May I come in?"

"And welcome, if it's you. Come in—I don't hide my Prophetess from you: if it hadn't been for you, her beginning would have been her end. I can't bear to talk about my work among the others while it's going on—it is like letting in common flaring daylight between one's self and one's dreams; do you ever feel what I mean? It is so wonderful to feel this new sort of life boiling up in one; it's meat and wine to me, and I've scarcely slept since you said of my Prophetess, 'She'll do!' I spend the night in waiting for daylight. Now, tell me honestly—will she do?"

Max looked at the picture long and earnestly.

"It's not nearly finished," he said slowly, "and it's lucky for you you've taken a wild sort of subject, for your anatomy is queer. But—she'll do. You will be a great man, Adolf—a very great man. Tell me," he added suddenly, as he saw the lad's eyes sparkle with pride and pleasure,

"do you so very much care about this trumpery prize?"

"The prize! Do you mean I have really a chance of the prize? Oh Max, it would be too glorious to conquer you!"

"Too glorious!—You are set upon it, then?"

"Why not? I am greedy of fame. I must go to Rome with honour. I feel I have genius, Max—you have told me so; and if it has come late it will last long. Yes, I *do* want the prize—it's nothing to you, and it's everything to me. You will stay at home and work on here—I must spread my wings and fly abroad. So you admit my Prophetess is better than your Cleopatra? Ah, how proud you must be to have discovered a genius greater than your own!—and when I am rich, Max, you too shall come to Rome."

So he, too, had used the words "It's nothing to you—everything to me." Max recognised the repetition of his own thought, and smiled scornfully. Adolf Meyer had no Elsa: Max Brendel would have been ashamed to indulge openly in such a display of selfish vanity. Nevertheless, greedy and selfish as his rival might appear to him, two stubborn facts were clear—the Prophetess *was* better than the Cleopatra, and Adolf Meyer did not mean to yield the prize. And Max was far too proud to sue like a pauper for charity to his rival's generosity.

"So be it, Adolf," he said, holding out his hand.

"I, too, want the prize. When that is adjudged we will be friends; till then we are rivals, and nothing more. I will do nothing to discourage you, but I will do nothing to aid you—I will not even see your Prophetess again for fear a hint that might help you should drop from me unawares. You must work on alone, like me. If you fail, your genius will soar up again, never fear. If I fail—but that's nothing to you. Good-bye, Adolph, till we meet at Philippi."

"Ah, I see you are not generous," said Adolf. "I was mistaken in you, Herr Brendel. You would rather earn a beggarly prize for yourself than help genius into the world. You are jealous—but you have taught me my strength, for which I thank you; and if I do not use it, if you crush it down, the loss will be the world's."

"Till Philippi, Adolf Meyer," repeated Max Brendel.

III.

Max went home, with a new and dogged determination—to prove that strength of will may rise even superior to genius when it draws on all its powers. The winning of Elsa for his wife had by this time identified itself in his mind with winning the prize. He felt as if he were playing dice with fate, and that this was his last throw. He was

excited by his challenge, but not with the champagne-like excitement of Adolf Meyer. He knew that his strength lay in hard work, and he was resolved this time to prove himself the tortoise and Meyer the hare.

He walked up to his Cleopatra with set lips and a firm brow. Without a moment's compunction or hesitation he took a knife and deliberately destroyed in a moment the anxious labour of many months. Then he drew a deep sigh of relief. He had a whole month before him, and the field of action was cleared.

But, as the dog in the fable lost the substance by grasping at the shadow, even so was it with Max Brendel. What subject should he take? It would employ his unimaginative mind more than the month to think one over, and every moment now was more precious than a pearl. How do artists invent—poets, painters, musicians—it matters not which, since all are akin? He racked his brains to think over all the different ways of work of which he had read or heard—how some men walked about the streets till the fancy came, how others wandered alone into the fields, how others listened to music, how others drank, how others smoked, how others lay in bed watching the dances of the flies, how others took up the pen or brush and let inspiration flow as it were, not from themselves, but from the dead instrument of their labour. How he spent the

next day or two he hardly knew, except that he more than once saw Elsa, whose society gave him transitory hope and courage, but not the inspiration that he required. He put in practice every receipt in turn. He went out into the streets, and met nothing. He wandered far afield, and nature smiled at him in silence—she yields no secrets to anxious minds. He lay on his bed and watched the flies, and saw—the flies. He went into the public garden, smoked, drank beer, and listened to the concert; but his friends came and chatted to him and drove away any idea that might have been suggested by waltzes and *pot-pourris*. Finally, in desperation, he stood before his bare canvas and dashed at it at random—nothing came.

Meanwhile the month became a month no more; and every day that perished gave him a stab as it passed by. He thought over histories, legends, myths, poems, and rejected them all—they were all old, he could give them no original treatment, and the Prophetess was new.

One day he met Adolf Meyer.

"How goes on the Cleopatra?" asked the latter. "Let me see—who was it that was beaten at Actium? You are looking pale—don't work for defeat too hard."

He felt himself so degraded that he could not even invent a false boast in order that his rival might at all events get the worst in a skirmish of

words. Meyer's taunt was one of the jests that kill.

Max Brendel lodged in one of the oldest, oddest, and most dilapidated houses in that medieval town, where all the houses are odd and old. It was dark, black, and rat-eaten, and has probably tumbled down by this time. The ground-floor was occupied by the landlord himself, a dealer in miscellaneous articles of every sort and kind, of which the less saleable strayed into every nook and corner of the lofts and stairs. Max payed less rent than would otherwise have been charged, on the understanding that he should not object to share his one room with a considerable quantity of lumber. His articles of furniture accordingly changed themselves pretty often, so that he seldom knew what chairs and tables stood in his room from one day to another; and it was therefore nothing new to him to see some unfamiliar movable in his room. Nothing but his easel was really his own: he often found himself without a table, and sometimes without a chair. His fellow-students used to date their visits to him from the epoch of the ebony cabinet, the wicker bird-cage, or the stuffed chamois. Elsa could never come to him there—at least he thought not, and her father, Herr Frohmann, was sure not: the dust, litter, and darkness alone would have killed one who was used to live in moderately pure air. But he was acclimatised to all its peculiarities: and so,

after his last encounter with his rival, he was not surprised to find a greater change than usual in the appearance of the room. His landlord had been selling, buying, or bartering—that was all.

All indeed—for the month had dwindled to four-and-twenty days, and the canvas on his easel was as barren as it had been seven days ago. He threw himself into a new arm-chair—an unwonted luxury—mechanically filled a china bowl with tobacco, and sought to evolve a fancy upon the canvas out of the smoke-clouds. His mind was calmer than it had been during the whole week before; but that meant nothing. Nothing is calmer than the despair which is on the point of turning into apathy.

"So Mayer thinks I'm looking pale. Well, it's a long time since I saw myself; I daresay I am." Trivial thoughts always mock the man who is deliberately trying to be inspired. "Elsa—Elsa—Elsa——" he thought, half aloud, as he rose and stood before a mirror, framed in carved black oak, that had been newly imported into the room with the arm-chair. Most pieces of furniture have a hidden history—new ones sometimes, old ones always. Who can say what occult effect may not be produced by some accident of manufacture—by some slight predominance of one element over another in a chemical mixture—some slip of the craftsman's hand? That mirror, with its antique and curious frame, must have had a story—it must

have reflected innumerable persons and scenes, some, it may be, indelibly, just as walls may remember what they hear with their ears. Who can tell? Only one thing is certain. Max Brendel looked in the looking-glass and saw a face. In that there was nothing strange; and yet he suddenly started from head to foot.

The face he saw was not his own.

IV.

Nor, by any possible caprice of twilight or of imagination could the face of the looking-glass be twisted into the wildest distortion of the homely features of Max Brendel. It was that of a woman, who was not otherwise reflected, even in the inmost recesses of his memory. How can it be described in the instant that measured his first bewilderment? It took many long bewildered moments before he himself saw all that there was to see. To say that the face was beautiful is as little as to say that Elsa was not beautiful—beauty lies in the eye that sees, not in the thing seen. It was a new face—unlike any he had ever seen before: it was foreign, and he had never to his knowledge seen a foreign face out of a picture: it was a face belonging to other times, although it was still young—youth was set upon it as upon jewels that never grow

old. Nor was it a recollection reflected in an excited fancy from any of the pictures in the gallery that he knew by heart: it was not the memory even of a dream—Max never dreamed, except of Elsa. In spite of the astonishment, not far removed from terror, that so sudden and unaccountable an apparition could not fail to cause, the painter's eyes were fascinated: he caught every detail long before he had recovered from his first surprise sufficiently to rub his eyes.

What he saw was the living picture of a lady, seemingly of high rank, emerging from the shadowy background of his own room, and dressed in one of those costumes that may be seen in many old Italian portraits, stiff and squarely cut in amber-coloured silk and point-lace, that covered the bust up to the throat and the arms down to the elbows. The slender neck wore a necklace of large pearls: the arms below the elbows, and the figure below the waist, were not visible.

These were the surroundings. The features themselves were of exquisite regularity; but their marvellous delicacy, even transparency of hue and texture, saved them from the statuesque lifelessness which people choose to call classical. She could have sat for no marble nymph or goddess, despite the perfect symmetry of every feature from brow to chin. The profuse and luxuriant hair thrown back freely from the brow, and waving down till

it disappeared behind the shoulders, was of the colour of gold, but not like gold—it sparkled and shone in the candle-light as though spun into silk from diamonds. The lips were tender and girlish, neither full nor thin, neither scarlet nor pale. The dazzlingly fair complexion was tinged with an ever-varying rose, that never faded for a moment, and yet never for a moment remained the same. It was as if, in some exquisitely delicate masterpiece of Venetian art, one looked at sunlight through sparkles of clearest wine. Some subtle association of ideas reminded him who now saw this face for the first time of almond blossoms and snow-crystals. There was no thought, however, of the coldness of snow: the image that rose unconsciously in the painter's mind was that of the almond-bough in full bloom, and at the same time hung with frost-jewels in the full light of the sun. The idea was both vague and discordant; but it was a discord of the kind without which an otherwise too harmonious musical phrase would lose the crown of perfection: it was an outrage upon harmony from which a new and more wonderful harmony seemed to spring. Her eyes, too, were at once both a concord and a discord—they were dark, of the grey that is often taken for brown, and looked forth gravely and softly from under firmly arched brows, just as the warm inner soul of the Spirit of Winter may sometimes look forth through her disguise of

snow. It was these eyes that fascinated and chained his own.

How other men would have received such a vision, each must judge for himself. Max Brendel, even before his first bewilderment had passed, was seized with a horrible fear—that of a sane man who for the first time in his life sees what is inconsistent with sanity.

"*Mein Gott!*" he exclaimed, as he grasped his head with both his hands, "the Prophetess has turned my brain!"

Even as he looked, the hitherto unseen hands of the apparition rose into sight and clasped her head, just as he had clasped his own, while the grave eyes still regarded him fixedly.

He dropped his hands to his side—hers, simultaneously, passed out of sight again.

"This is too horrible! These hideous seven days have sent me mad—Elsa is betrothed to a madman! I have heard of such things: how men may brood over one thought, and try to draw water from an empty brain till reason goes. I am Max Brendel—yes," he said aloud, as if arguing with an adversary, "Max Brendel the painter, the betrothed of Elsa Frohmann, who live in the Adler-Gasse, who tried to paint Cleopatra—I am not a woman; I have neither golden hair nor grey eyes, I wear neither yellow silk nor a necklace of pearls. What! you are still there? You insist on making

me disbelieve my own eyes? They see true enough — the candles, the easel, the books, the stove, the pipe that was given me by Rothkopf, my own coat, my own hands—and to be tricked by an accursed looking-glass into seeing a face that I never saw the like of all my life before!" He took several rapid turns about the room, drank a glass of water, rubbed his eyes violently, and came back to the mirror. The strange face was still there.

"It is some trick of Rothkopf or Sleinitz," he exclaimed angrily,—"some villany of Adolf Meyer." He searched the room all over, and discovered that no trick was possible. He shifted the position of the mirror, and the face still remained—only changing its aspect as he changed, and moving as he moved. In all things but in dress and in feature it was still as much his own reflection as if this were the most ordinary of mirrors.

He nervously exhausted every experiment by which he might decide whether he really saw anything so incredible, or whether he only thought he saw. At last a crucial test struck him. He ran quickly down-stairs to the ground-floor, where his landlord kept the bulk of his miscellaneous stock-in-trade.

"Herr Elias!" he called out, bursting without ceremony into the broker's shop or den, "come up instantly—I mean if you're not busy. I want to ask you about the price of something."

Herr Elias, Max Brendel's landlord, was a little old man, with a black skull-cap, a wrinkled face, twinkling eyes, and a ragged white beard. He bowed politely to the only tenant in the world who would have paid him any rent whatever for a partial possession of his rat-eaten lumber-room.

"Eh, eh! you want to buy, my good Herr Max? You want some more handsome china for the good Herr Frohmann? Well, I have some quite new, my good Herr Max, that you shall have a bargain. But there is none in your apartment: what is it you want me to see?"

"Only a looking-glass—it struck my fancy—that's all."

"Eh! The looking-glass! That will be for the good Fräulein, then? Yes—it is a good looking-glass, a beautiful looking-glass, a wonderful looking-glass, and I will sell it you cheap, my good Herr Max—a handsome marriage-gift for the Elsa; it is to come off soon, then, eh, eh? Ah, when I wipe the dust off, you will not grudge what I shall charge; and you shall pay me by just putting a few kreutzers you won't miss on to the rent, if you'd rather not pay down."

"Well, come and show me all about it, Herr Elias. Where did it come from?" he asked, while the old broker climbed slowly up-stairs.

"Aha! where it came from? I am a little deaf,

my good Herr Max—that is as may be. Such things come and go, my good Herr Max, mostly when people owe more than they can pay, and don't like their names known. Ah, I could tell you strange things. Now that looking-glass—but no, my good Herr Max, there are things to be told, and there are things not to be told. But never you fear, my good Herr Max; it is mine, and it shall be yours—a real bargain." They were now in front of the mirror. "It is beautiful, my good Herr Max—it is fit for a queen. Look at the carving—not the good Herr Frohmann could beat that, if he tried a hundred years. They knew how to carve when that was made. And see—now I wipe the glass it shines like silver. It will make the Elsa look like the daughter of a burgomaster. Ah, my good Herr Max, I'd rather the Elsa would look into it than any great lady of them all. You shall have it dirt cheap; and if you pay for it with the rent, you won't feel it more than if I gave it you for nothing at all."

But the ingenious contrivance of Herr Elias for raising the rent of his lumber-room was lost upon his tenant. The broker was looking intently into the glass all the time he was speaking, and said nothing to show that he saw anything but his own withered face and white beard. Max, too, saw clearly the reflection of Herr Elias. But by the side of the broker, and opposite to himself, he saw,

not himself, but the Face—unchanged, down to the minutest detail of dress, expression, or form.

"Look, Herr Elias!" he said wildly; "what do you see there?"

"Where, my good——"

"There—in the mirror!"

"In the mirror? I see the room—I see you—I see me. Ah, one sees everything in that mirror, my good Herr Max—everything!"

"Nothing—no one—more?"

"Eh, eh! what should be more?"

"Then I *am* mad," groaned poor Max in despair. But he only said, "Oh, nothing—only a shadow, I suppose."

"Ah, you painters are curious people—you see what nobody else sees, and don't see what everybody sees. Yes, that is a famous mirror—you see everything there, and get it a bargain besides. Only a trifle on to the rent—leave it to me, my good Herr Max, and it's done. Shall we say done?"

"Let us say good night, Herr Elias," was all Max, now that his last hope was gone, could say. "We'll talk about it to-morrow. I don't feel quite myself—if you could trust me with a *schnaps*——"

"Trust you, my good Herr Max!—with the bottle—and add it to the trifling charge for the looking-glass, so you won't feel it at all. You shall have the *schnaps*, never fear. Good night,

my good Herr Max, and sleep well. The good Herr Max has been working too hard," thought Herr Elias as he went down-stairs again. "We must make hay while the sun shines."

V.

Which is best—to believe thoroughly in one's self or to have somebody else who thoroughly believes in one? The self-doubting Max Brendel had at all events the latter privilege—he was believed in most implicitly by Elsa Frohmann.

To her, Max Brendel was already the greatest of all painters, living or dead: and so would he remain to her even though he should lose five hundred prizes. To be loved is to enjoy, in one's lifetime, imperishable fame. She looked forward to the great competition—a really grand event in that out-of-the-way place, more especially as it took place only once in three years—with the certainty of triumph: her lover's doubts and fears were in her eyes but signs of the modesty which is supposed, more popularly than soundly, to go hand in hand with genius. As the days went on, however, even she began to grow anxious, if not, as yet, to fear. Max, though as loving as ever, was not quite the same to her as of old. That he was working desperately hard, she knew; but her idea

of work was of something that made people strong and cheerful, and did not chain their tongues and cover their brows with gloom. Her Max was her all, and she watched him jealously. They had vowed to be like daylight to one another; but even she, though assured he would keep nothing from her, began to fear that he had something on his mind besides his chronic poverty, and this terrible contest that was now so close at hand.

If only that could be leapt over by wishing, or if, at least, they could know the best or worst at once and beforehand! Why could not the great people give everybody who deserved it a prize, without making a dozen people anxious and wretched in order to make one man anxious and happy? For the first time in her life, had any one asked her if she was happy, she would have said No. As the days still crept on, she began to catch the fever of impatience, and, though she would have waited for Max till the end of time, found a single week of waiting not less hard to bear than Max or Meyer.

Yes—it now wanted no more than a single week to the day, and the two chief rivals still shut themselves up alone. Adolf Meyer, in spite of his self-sufficing genius, had taken his rival's hint and was working hard to strengthen his drawing: Max was engaged no one knew how—not even Elsa. She would have been wounded by this want of con-

fidence had she not the most infinite respect for the peculiarities of the artist nature, and were she not sure that Max had some sufficient reason for his secrecy: he might have set his heart upon giving her a surprise, or he might be under a vow. She herself had made a vow. If the judges gave the prize to Max, she would give up wearing her beautiful ear-rings for a whole year.

And now it was six days—five days—four days to the time. Now to-morrow it would be the day after to-morrow, now it was actually to-morrow—now, in six hours, it would be to-day. Elsa hoped that Max would spend the eve of the competition with her. But, to her bitter disappointment, he excused himself on the ground that he still had something left to do.

"But Patience!" once more said Elsa—to herself this time.

Adolf Meyer, like Max Brendel, remained at home during these last hours. No cowardly self-distrust marred the coming triumph of the Genius who was to be revealed. It was far more than a triumph to him. He, the despised of his fellow-students, would to-morrow show them Whom they had despised—what angel they had been entertaining unawares. All their jests would be avenged at one blow; and in a few short years—a few months, more likely—the world of art would resound with the name of Adolf Meyer. The judges

came by invitation from a greater city. They would, of course, carry back news of the genius whom they had discovered in a corner: his picture would at once lead to profitable commissions. The Prophetess would find a home in some splendid gallery to which pilgrimages would be made from far and near — and the journals would speak of "that rising young painter, Adolf Meyer — the German Raphael." What would Rothkopf and Sleinitz say then? And then — with the praises of the judges and the plaudits of the spectators still hot in his ears, he would be generous. He would hold out his hand to his defeated rival, and would say, before them all, "I am the artist, but you are the critic, Max—my glory is your noblest prize,"—and then the applause would ring out again. All this and many more such thoughts crowded into the young man's mind as he stalked up and down his room, already intoxicated with the untasted flavour of fame. While Max was the disbeliever in himself in whom somebody believed, Meyer was the man in whom nobody believed except himself—and this added an intense zest to his coming victory over his rival, over public opinion, over everybody and everything.

Thus, then, the eve of the competition was passed by all who were most interested therein—by Max in seeming sullenness, by Adolf Meyer in solitary castle-building, by Rothkopf and Sleinitz

in beer-drinking, by Elsa in hope disguised as fear.

Meanwhile the Prophetess was finished, and the Cleopatra, on which her hope was built, had been destroyed.

She did not close her eyes all night, except once; when she fell off into a dream. Max was being tried for his life, and Meyer was standing by with the town headsman's sword. She had never seen Adolf, but she knew it was he. She woke with a start, and found the hour still too early even for a German girl, who was her father's sole housekeeper and servant, to rise.

At last came the terrible hour when she might calm her impatience by putting on all her finery to see the show, to which Max had obtained admission for her. But as she put the ear-rings into her ears her heart sank—she thought how she had looked forward to being present at her husband's triumph, and now she repented that she had ever undertaken to go. Would it not be best to wait at home for the tidings of good or of ill? What should she do if she heard the judges read out the name of Adolf Meyer? But then staying at home would prolong the suspense, and that would be worse still; and perhaps her presence might give some little strength to Max. Any way she must not begin her career as a wife by hiding herself away from her husband's fortunes, whatever they

might be; and, as a last reason for not staying at home, she could not keep away from where her heart would be.

Max came early to take her to the *Rath-haus*, or town-hall, where the pictures of the several candidates were to be examined and compared. He looked collected and firm, though his face was pale, and though there was an odd, dreamy sort of look about his eyes—not altogether new to Elsa during the last few weeks, but never so conspicuous as now.

"Thou must indeed have been working too hard, my poor Max," she said, softly: "thou must not be wretched and unhappy for a poor little girl like thy Elsa. But that shall not be when I take thee in charge, and get thee away from that ugly old Elias."

She took his arm as she spoke, and looked up in his face with what was meant for a courageous smile. But he only answered—

"Come, Elsa."

The old *Rath-haus* was beautiful only in the eyes of antiquarians, but to her it was the very type of all architectural magnificence, next to the cathedral; and to actually enter it, with real business there, was almost awe-inspiring. No criminal, innocent or guilty, ever felt more reverence for the judges of his life or liberty than did Elsa for the two gentlemen who had been invited from far

away by the Burgomaster to decide what young man should be fairly launched into the world of art, there to become famous, or to break his heart, or to starve, or, more probably, to become one of a crowd of nobodies. Half-a-dozen pictures stood in the hall side by side, all carefully covered over, and each bearing a distinguishing number. All the students and the two or three professors were there, some with outside acquaintances, some alone. There was Rothkopf: there was Sleinitz: there, apart from the rest, stood one, with an eager light in his girlish face and with his hands working nervously, who, Elsa's heart at once told her, was Adolf Meyer. He looked towards Max and smiled: Elsa could have killed him for his smile.

The friends of Max—that is to say, almost all who were present—came up and spoke to him,—some jestingly, but all as if his success were a foregone conclusion. Meyer looked on and smiled again. Elsa felt proud of her lover's popularity, which she watched from a chair among the privileged spectators at the end of the room — all these people must be right, surely! Max was impassive.

At last, the town beadle, in official costume and bearing a long white wand, heralded his worship the Burgomaster, a fat little lawyer with a jolly round face and good-natured eyes. He was followed by two strangers to the town: one a tall,

black-bearded, black-headed, handsome man of about five-and-forty, who strode in like a soldier; the other a shabbily-dressed, elderly man, with a skin like parchment, bald and grey. These were the two judges upon whose verdict hung the future of Max Brendel and Elsa Frohmann. How she studied them from head to foot—their eyes, their hair, their very boots—in search of some hidden oracle!

The form of procedure was in the nature of a lottery. Numbers corresponding to those marked upon each covered canvas were placed in a box, drawn out in order of chance, and called; and each picture was uncovered and examined when its number came. There were six pictures, and Elsa knew that Max Brendel's number was five.

A little girl, the Burgomaster's daughter, was to draw the numbers, and the beadle was to call them. So formal a ceremony was as good as a play to all the spectators, save one.

"The competition is opened," said the Burgomaster.

The parchment-skinned man stood up by the box, patted the little girl on the head, and said a few words in the voice of a raven: then the tall man made a few remarks to his own beard. It was all intensely awful and imposing to Elsa. Then the little girl drew a number.

"Number Four!" cried the beadle.

Elsa was relieved—somehow a first-drawn number never wins. But—was Number Four Adolf Meyer's? It was a fairly-painted landscape. The judges inspected it for a moment in silence, and the parchment-skinned man croaked "next number."

"Number Two!"

Before Number Two the judges did not pause even for one moment.

"Why, Hans," Elsa heard Sleinitz whisper to Rothkopf, "you hadn't the impudence to send in that sketch you didn't begin till yesterday after your thirteenth pint of beer?"

"Why not? Giotto was recognised by drawing a simple circle—why should not the genius of Hans Rothkopf be apparent in the smallest outline from his hand? *Aut Cæsar aut nullus*—and if Max must be Cæsar, I'd sooner be Nullus than nobody."

"Number Three!"

"Why, Sleinitz," said Rothkopf, "you hadn't the impudence to send in that thing?"

"Why not?" asked Sleinitz. "There's no knowing what accidents may happen. Suppose the Cleopatra hadn't turned up, you know, and then Sleinitz would have come in as a *pis aller*."

"Number Six!"

"Ah, that's ——'s," said Rothkopf. Elsa could not catch the name, but it was not Meyer. There were now but two numbers left—one and five. Five being Brendel's, one must therefore be Meyer's.

How Elsa's heart beat when the child's hand went into the box for the fifth time!

"Number Five!"

The number was Max Brendel's, but the picture was not the Cleopatra

VI.

The two judges, hitherto so impassive, started—they looked at one another. The students crowded round.

"That is not Max Brendel's," said one.

"That *can't* be Adolf Meyer's," said Sleinitz.

"That must be the Devil's," said Rothkopf.

"Silence! Silence!" cried the beadle.

"Next number," croaked the parchment-skinned man.

"Number One!"

But, before the cover could be drawn from Number One, Adolf Meyer rushed forward and stood before it with outstretched arms, his back to the picture and his face to the two judges. His wild eyes were wilder than ever, his hair almost bristled on his head, and his cheeks were deadly pale.

"No!" he said. "No; not Number One. It is withdrawn."

"Stand back, sir!" said the Burgomaster. "Who are you, and why do you interfere?"

"Number One is withdrawn," persisted Adolf

Meyer, in a sort of scream. "It is mine—Adolf Meyer's—and I may do what I please with my own. It is withdrawn, I say. It is unfinished—it was brought here by mistake—it is—anything, but it shall not be seen."

"What folly is this?" asked the parchment-skinned painter. "We are here to decide—not you—and we will see all."

"If you are afraid of being beaten," said the dark man, with sombre good-nature, "that is a mistake that those only make who are——"

His eyes suddenly fell upon Number Five, and he did not add "likely to win."

"I am not afraid," said Adolf Meyer. "But this picture *shall not* be seen."

"And I say it *shall*, sir," said the Burgomaster, angrily. "Beadle, remove this man."

"Herr Burgomaster," said Adolf Meyer, with a sudden change of tone, "it is no longer in the competition, even if it were not withdrawn. I stand upon the rules. The judges must be ignorant of the painter's name till they have decided which picture is the best on its merits without suspicion of favour. If a student lets them know his name beforehand, he is disqualified, and his picture is out of the field. These gentlemen now know that Number One is painted by Adolf Meyer; and if I choose to insist on a rule to my own disadvantage, what is that to them or you?"

"That is true," said the Burgomaster. "Gentlemen, we must observe the rules."

"This is too bad," grumbled Sleinitz. "We shan't see Meyer's picture after all."

But Max Brendel came forward.

"My fellow-students, Herr Burgomaster," he said, "will, I am sure, waive such a rule. Far be it from us to throw suspicion on the impartiality of our honourable judges."

Elsa was bewildered; but this was like her own Max, and her heart beat high again. She leaned forward to listen with all her ears.

"Hold your tongue, Max Brendel," shouted Meyer, "or I will make it the worse for you—this is no affair of yours. I have a right not to show my picture unless I please. I don't please, and the rule I have intentionally broken shall not be waived. I appeal to the Herr Burgomaster, who knows the law. I say that to compel a man to show an unfinished work is unfair."

"Enough of this," said the Burgomaster. "Herr Meyer is in the right: we break no rules here. The drawing is closed."

The two great painters conferred together for an instant. Then the parchment-skinned man said—

"And not only the drawing, Herr Burgomaster, but our deliberation. I speak both for myself and my colleague when I say that the prize is awarded, without hesitation, to Number Five. We are im-

patient to learn the name of the young man who has begun his career with a masterpiece. Whichever of you gentlemen he may be, we hasten to congratulate him on having combined the work of a thorough artist with an originality of conception and treatment very rare in modern times. We formally award him the prize, as the first and the least of the distinctions he will achieve for himself, for this town, for German art, and for the glory of our Fatherland."

"Max Brendel—his name is Max Brendel," cried out a dozen of voices as Max came forward, almost trembling. The hall rang once more with his name joined to loud hurrahs. Elsa was weeping tears of joy—she longed to throw herself upon his neck before them all.

But there was one envious soul to whom this triumph was worse than terrible. Unable to bear the mortification of open defeat—for the first sight of Max Brendel's picture, so glaringly superior to his Prophetess, had overthrown in a moment his Palace of Alnaschar—he had given up the contest in a rage. But to see his rival in the actual enjoyment of the glory he had promised himself, was too much for his flesh and blood to bear. He was still the scorned Adolf Meyer, and now doubly scorned. His nervous, morbid temperament allowed him to see nothing beyond the humiliation of the hour—he had become the laughing-stock not only of his

fellow-students but of fate, and was conscious of no latent strength wherewith to renew a lost battle. None can despair so easily and so utterly as the young. No one thought of, or looked at him; his apparently unaccountable caprice was set down to natural folly; but every cheer for Max Brendel came upon him like a jeer for Adolf Meyer. He slunk away in the midst of his rival's triumph with his invisible Prophetess under his arm. His new-born genius, his hopes, his pride, his vanity had all received a mortal wound—and he had no Elsa to teach courage and fortitude to one who had none of his own.

VII.

"At last, then, dear Max!" exclaimed Elsa, as she linked her arm into her lover's at the *Rath-haus* door. "Ah! I knew you would win: the idea of Adolf Meyer or Adolf anybody daring to think he could beat you; why, the very sight of your picture frightened him away. But what *is* your picture, Max? That was not the Cleopatra, I know, that you used to tell me about; she was dark, like me," she added, with a passing touch of loving jealousy. "I didn't think you cared to paint grey eyes and yellow hair—you used not to. But never mind—I shall love grey eyes and yellow hair now, as they have brought us nearer. What will father say now,

when his awkward Elsa is betrothed to the greatest painter in all Germany?—Oh Max!—But what is it? Are you not well? It has been too much for you, my poor boy! Yes, when they said Number Five had won, I too found there is nothing so hard to bear as joy. But you look so pale—and your arm trembles——"

"It is joy, Elsa—joy does not kill." But though he spoke of joy, it was not with the air of a joyful man. His eyes still dreamed, and the cloud had deepened on his brow. "But you are right, Elsa —I am not well; I suppose the excitement has been too much for me, and I have been working too hard."

"Then you must take a good long holiday, and you shall begin it with me this very day. We will have a feast, and you shall take me to the coffee-garden—father will spare me, and I may wear my ear-rings now. We are to be always together now, you know, and we'll lose no time."

"Ah, Elsa! you forget; this prize obliges me to go to Rome. I must do much still before I can win you."

Her face fell.

"Oh Max, that is cruel to make me think of our parting in the midst of my joy! It is that, then, that makes you so sad and grave? Must you go soon?"

"It is too true—I fear I must lose no time:

every day's delay will eat into the prize. It is hard, Elsa, but——"

"Is there no happiness that does not taste bitter when it comes? But no, I don't mean that, dearest, dearest Max—I won't think a word that shall trouble the other life of yours that isn't me. I am so proud —so happy! Think how miserable we should be if we were not going to part—if you were not going to Rome. It is what we have prayed for, and we mustn't find fault with what God gives us. It will be easy waiting now."

Max kissed her, but coldly. They were now at her father's door, but he would not come in. "I am fit for nothing to-day," he said. "I have a splitting headache—I must get some sleep at once, if I can. Don't worry yourself, though, dear Elsa —it's only excitement: I only want a good long sleep, that's all. Good-bye, darling: I must get well at once—I have so much to do before I leave for Rome."

It was a sad disappointment to lose her pleasure after her triumph. But there was no help for it, since Max was really unwell, and she dried her eyes. Had all her little plans been fulfilled she would have had too much happiness for a single day. It was hard that he and she would not spend together this day of all days, in the face of their coming separation; but she felt how much Max must need rest, and was half relieved to find that

over-work and over-anxiety might be taken to account for his changed ways.

He embraced her again, more warmly, it seemed to her, than ever, and again said "Good-bye." Then he hastened home, ran quietly up the gloomy staircase, entered his room, and slowly removed from the mirror a cloth with which it was covered.

Poor Elsa! How can the truth be told?

Through the whole of the night in which that mysterious face had appeared to him he had sat in a mental maze, doubting the truth of his eyesight and the soundness of his brain. He tried every test he could think of to prove himself the victim of a passing illusion, but it was all in vain: the vision was as real, at least to him, as if it had been a living form. At last there was nothing for it but to let his eyes and his brain have their own way. Perhaps satiety of sight might cause the phantom to disappear. He examined, one by one, every point of form, hue, and feature, every fold of her dress, every movement of her eyes. Sleep overcame him; and, when he awoke, the phantom, unexorcised even by slumber, was the first object on which his eyes fell. It was proved, therefore, to be no offspring of a weary brain. The light of returning day and the waking sounds of morning did not affect his midnight apparition. He made himself some strong coffee, and then, moved by some impulse with which conscious intention had

nothing to do, he went straight to his canvas and began to sketch rapidly. If any definite idea had a share in what he did, it was a desperate sort of fancy that an attempt to reproduce a brain phantom on canvas would be a crowning test of its reality. He had learned too well his lack of all creative power, and that he could not express what he could not really see.

But, as he worked and as he became familiar with every detail, every turn and trick of his model, his interest grew. He had the unprecedented experience of finding his idea ready to hand without the effort of thinking, and was thus enabled to concentrate his whole mind upon overcoming the mere technical difficulties of reproduction. Never had painter so obliging a sitter. He had only to change his attitude in order to place her at once in any position or aspect he pleased. Nay, he had only to frown to make her frown too; and doubtless he could have made her smile had he himself been in a smiling mood. His work grew under his hand; and when darkness came he left off with a new fear — the fear lest the vision should fade away before another morning came.

Like Adolf Meyer, he spent the night not in sleep but in waiting for daylight. He sat up the whole night through, to see that the face did not vanish, and was rejoiced when, at sunrise, he found it more clear and perfect than when it had first appeared.

Some may think that the long-continued effort to create had at last succeeded, and that his association of his fancy with the looking-glass was an accidental and not unprecedented hallucination. He did not think so, however—he had ceased to think at all. He only worked, toiling on and on at his no longer barren canvas till the form and features of his model became more deeply fixed on his mind than even those of Elsa. He would have given up half his hopes to hear her voice, or at least to be able to read the unspoken language of her deep eyes. He spoke to her at last, in the half hope that a mirror which reflected a non-existent face might be able to effect the scarcely greater marvel of reflecting a voice also. But, though her lips parted and moved in answer, not a sound came.

Such work as this soon becomes a passion. An artist seldom loves the forms that he consciously invents: they are only the daughters of his soul. But the fancies that he cannot refer to his own mental parentage, and which come upon him as it were from an unknown world,—these are his soul's wives. His work gave him no pride of genius, like Adolf Meyer's: self-love could not be born from what was not his own. Some sort of love, however, could not fail to spring.

When he was with Elsa he dreamed of her whom he had left at home: when he painted, he did not

think of Elsa. Few and rare are the souls that are large enough to contain two ideas at once and to blend them into one: seldom may human love survive when a man is seized with the enthusiasm of an idea, whether of art, fame, or gold. There cannot be two all-sufficing things—even the few diviner spirits must blend the two loves into one before they can contain the two. Max Brendel's spirit was very human, and it had been seized with the fullest enthusiasm of a new idea. The Max who had seen this face could not be, even to Elsa, the Max who had never seen it: no wonder she thought him changed.

When his picture was finished, he almost felt as if his life had come to an end. When the prize was won, he felt as if such a result had degraded his labour of love. When Elsa wept for joy, he felt as though he had suddenly fallen to earth from the heights of a glorious dream. How, in his heart, could he sympathise with her childish joy? He had been wandering among regions wherein the foot of no mortal wife could bear him company, and which he must travel alone.

But how should he travel them, seeing that man is not made to be alone? His mind could henceforth conceive but of one face and form fit to occupy his dreams; and that was now on canvas: it could be nothing to him any more. It had done its work, and must be thrown aside. When

he returned to his room after saying good-bye to Elsa, he felt as though he had come to say a yet longer farewell to her whom his mind had married—to the one new form in all the universe of art that he should ever be able to call his own. Never would he be able to live in such a rapture of soul-absorbing work again; such a divorce as this emptied all value from a common money-prize that brought him, at best, the power to win a mere earthly wife by dull and plodding toil.

"Good-bye — good-bye," he exclaimed, as he pressed his lips to the mirror so closely as to feel, in what seemed more than fancy, the pressure returned. He took a last look, and let the cloth fall over the face like the corner of a lifted shroud.

So ended this grand contest for Adolf Meyer, Elsa Frohmann, and Max Brendel. Victors and vanquished were alike disappointed; only those got any gratification from it who, like Rothkopf and Sleinitz, never expected any at all.

"Eh, eh! my good Herr Max," coughed a voice at his elbow.

He started; it was only Herr Elias, in his black skull-cap and ragged white beard.

"Well, Herr Elias? Here I am, if you want me."

"Yes, my good Herr Max, there you are. Before that beautiful glass—so cheap, too, for you! So you have got the great prize, and are going to

Rome? There are all sorts of curious things in Rome, my good Herr Max—all sorts, they say. If you find any old heathen temples to be sold cheap, or mummies a bargain, or any old red hats going begging, think of Herr Elias, my good Herr Max—it's all in his line. You are a clever young man. But that mirror? will you buy? If you are going to Rome, you see, I can add it to the rent no more, eh?"

How—was not his phantom his own even so much as this? He had forgotten that when he bade it farewell. It was too true; his vision was the property of an old broker, and might be thrown into a bargain with a suit of old clothes.

"Well, well," he said; "you are in no hurry about such a thing as this, I suppose. I should like to have that—mirror—I own; but one doesn't go to Rome in a day."

"Eh, eh! my good Herr Max—but one may sell a looking-glass in a day. For example: you know the old castle just outside the town?"

"Castle Regenstein? What then?"

"Aha! the tumble-down old castle is to be made to tumble up again, brand new. It has been taken by a great foreign baroness who loves the antique and has come to Herr Elias to help her."

"And that mirror——?" asked Max, feeling himself turn pale.

"And that glass, as you rightly say, my good

Herr Max, is just the thing for a great foreign baroness with a taste for the antique, the cheap, and the beautiful. On my word, it will make the Elsa look like a baroness, but it will make a baroness look like the Elsa! And to-morrow, my good Herr Max, that beautiful, cheap bargain will be at Regenstein, and in the *Adler Gasse* no more; here to-day, gone to-morrow, as they say, and even so are we all."

It only wanted this to prove to him how the face had by this time grown to be a part of himself —how its loss would fill him with an eternal hunger. True, it was nothing more to him as a painter, but it had been the soul of his soul: its very shadow was his life's one reality. It would have been easier to part with Elsa than with her.

"And the price?" he asked in a fever.

"Dirt is dear to it, my good Herr Max. I shall charge the good baroness five hundred little gulden —not a kreutzer more."

"Five hundred gulden!"

"And dirt cheap, my good Herr Max! It is not one per cent on what I gave."

"Five hundred gulden—for what I was to pay for in kreutzers?"

"Eh, eh! but you will pay me no rent in Rome: and you are not a baroness, my good——"

"The devil take your good Herr Max and your five hundred gulden!"

"Eh, eh, eh! not so fast, my good Herr Max!—Perhaps he may."

VIII.

It may be remembered—or forgotten—that five hundred gulden, a fortune to a poor German art student, was precisely the amount of the prize.

Max Brendel had not been to bed for weeks, nor did he lie down to-night, though his head really ached almost as much as he had professed to Elsa. He paced up and down his room, from midnight to morning. If it had not been for this accursed prize! It was not in nature to bear the thought that his genius wife should be made a matter of vulgar traffic between a baroness and a broker. It would be profanation, sacrilege, to allow this masterpiece of supernature to be hung up in a fine lady's boudoir, far away from the only eyes that could penetrate its secret and comprehend its wonder. After all, was the prize itself, morally speaking, his own? Did it not belong to the vision who had as it were intrusted it to him? Would not Adolf Meyer have won it but for her? Was it not a debt to be repaid? Elsa might have vowed her ear-rings a thousand times over, and nothing would have come of it: the lady of the diamond locks came, was seen, and conquered. It was to him alone she had revealed herself; and

now, for the sake of a paltry five hundred gulden, she, the mistress, genius, and poetry of his life was to be sold from him to—a baroness! To lose her for the sake of keeping five hundred gulden, would be literally to sell his blessing for a mess of pottage.

And Elsa?—Well, he would be true to her, of course: but would is not could, and Elsa was not his soul. This was his soul: and to sever himself from his soul is the one thing that man cannot do. It did not strike him that selling Elsa for an old looking-glass was at least as much like Esau's bargain as the other alternative.

At last, having worked himself to that pitch of fever-heat in which men are most prone to make irrevocable decisions, he put the matter into the hands of destiny.

"I must see Elsa at once," he thought: "if I see Herr Elias before I see Elsa I will keep the mirror: if I see Elsa before I see Herr Elias I will keep the prize." At any rate, he threw the advantage of probability on the side of Elsa.

It was early, but not too early to visit his betrothed: the sun was up, and she was always up before the sun. He took a last lingering look at his shrine, covered it again, and prepared to leave the room and the house.

"Eh, eh, my good Herr Max," coughed Herr Elias in his ear. "I am come to take away the glass, for

the baroness at Regenstein. Ah, it is the early bird that picks up the worm."

It was decided, then. With the best will to see Elsa before there was any apparent chance of seeing Herr Elias, he had seen Herr Elias before Elsa. It seemed to him less his own voice than the voice of the chance he had invoked that stammered out—

"Not so, Herr Elias. With five hundred and one gulden I outbid the baroness. The mirror is mine."

"Aha! I thought you would buy," said Herr Elias, nodding his head sagaciously. "You are wise, my good Herr Max, and I wish you joy."

So ended the struggle for the prize of Rome. It was gained only to be thrown away for a fancy —for a dream. Max had obtained his heart's desire, but he threw down his hat and cloak—he could not go to see Elsa now.

There would be time enough for him to think how he could keep the prize, so as to pay Herr Elias, and at the same time get out of going to Rome. Meanwhile, for at least one morning, he would revel in his dream — now his very own. Partly to kill thought, partly from impulse, partly to make work an excuse for not visiting Elsa, he placed a fresh canvas on the easel, took a crayon and began a bold sketch of the same figure in another form.

He soon became so absorbed in the work of

giving a new shape to his one idea that he failed to hear a quick though gentle tap at the door. It was repeated before he answered "Come in."

"Elsa!" he exclaimed in surprise.

"I couldn't help coming, Max," she said. "I was dreaming all night long you were ill. Nobody knows I'm here, and if they did I shouldn't mind, so long as you're well."

He stood up with his back against the easel, so as to hide the subject of the sketch on which he was engaged.

"Quite well, as you see, Elsa. I was only waiting till it was late enough to come to you. I wish, though—I hope you have not been seen coming to me—Herr Elias is——"

"Late enough, Max! Why, it's close on noon. Do you think I should have come to you unless I thought you were never coming to me, and that it must be because you were ill?"

This was the first reproachful speech she had ever made him since their betrothal two years ago.

"So late? Near noon? Impossible! But I have been working——"

"What! again, again? Oh, Max, can't you put by your work for one day, when we have so few together now? I am anxious about you, Max: you will be really ill, and then though I shall keep you a little while longer you'll lose your great chance by having to stay at home. I

wouldn't keep you from going away, no, not for the world. There—put down your crayon: you'll have lots of time for work in Rome when you haven't got Elsa to plague you. Why, what's this? You are drawing the same girl you got the prize for,—who is she, Max?"

"Nobody, Elsa—nobody at all. Fancy: nothing more. Why, what girl is there like that in all the town? And you know I haven't been away to look for models."

"Really—nobody? You have never seen anybody like that, with the grey eyes and the yellow hair, and the skin that looks as if you could see the light through? Not even before you saw me?"

"Really—nobody."

"I am so glad, Max! I shouldn't have liked anybody real to have got you the prize but me. Only I heard Rothkopf saying to Sleinitz that you couldn't have done that without a model, and they were wondering who she could be. Then there is really nobody like that—nobody at all?"

"What a little infidel you are, Elsa! will you not take my word? There is really nobody like that —on my honour. Will that help you to believe me?"

"I should be so horribly jealous if there were. Not because she'd be beautiful, I'm sure, though you've made her so: a woman like that could never

be quite real. She looks spun out of crystal, and as if flesh and blood weren't good enough for her. I don't like that deep look in her eyes, and she doesn't look *good*, Max—not even, somehow, about her hair. She is like what Lorelei must be in the song, or perhaps like the Greek woman you told me of who made people look at her till they turned to stone. And yet she *is* beautiful; and I'm so glad she's like nobody real—that you have never known anybody like her."

"Pictures are strange things, Elsa; they come from nobody knows where."

"I shall call her the Glass-Queen. If ever I meet her I shall be afraid to touch her, for fear she should break in one of my two left hands."

"Well, you needn't be afraid—you'll never meet her. She came from nowhere—I've looked at you so much that I suppose you have suggested your own opposite. But there—that's enough of her."

But a woman need not be of flesh and blood to inspire jealousy in the heart of a loving girl. Elsa loved so well that she could have been jealous of a cat that came between herself and Max—how much more jealous must she be of what seemed to belong to another life that she could hardly comprehend? After all, she was something of a child. She put both her hands on his shoulder, looked up into his eyes, and said—in order to hear once more from his lips the answer that she knew would come—

"Please tell me once more, Max—I won't be angry,—did you *never*—never since you were born—see any living woman to haunt you as she must have done?"

Why he did not take her into his confidence is clear enough. Among more obvious reasons, she had ceased to belong to his secret inner life, newborn long since he had first known her; and though in his heart he no longer called himself a madman, he could not, without long hesitation, confess himself to be the apparent victim of an illusion. But, in his masculine stupidity, he was, instead of being flattered by her instinctive jealousy, provoked by her seemingly incredulous persistence.

"Never, Elsa," he said, more vehemently than the occasion appeared to need,—"never, since I was born. There is no such woman. There never has been—there never will be. Never, on my honour, Elsa!"

"I am so glad! You swear it, Max?"

"I swear it, by all that is holy. There—are you content now?"

"More than content, Max—thank you for not laughing at my——"

Both were talking so earnestly that they did not perceive themselves to be no longer alone. The door, however, might easily have been opened by any stranger who was weary of waiting for admittance; and Herr Elias, or any other member of

the household, might well have shown a visitor the way without being heard upon the stairs. In any case, when Elsa turned her eyes, they fell upon one who was both a stranger and not a stranger: upon one whom she had never seen, and yet had seen once before.

She started and pointed towards the visitor—she would have spoken, but her tongue felt paralysed: Max looked—and, for the second time in his life, nearly refused to believe his own eyes. Just within the door, with her fingers still on the handle, stood a lady—the exact double, down to the minutest detail of feature and expression, of the picture which had, with such seeming unreason, clouded Elsa's peace of mind. Max Brendel saw, either in the flesh or in the spirit, the phantom of the mirror.

It was well for him that there was one thing he did not see—how the colour died in a moment out of Elsa's cheeks, and the light from her eyes, only to return in a new way. Here, then, was the secret of the mysterious picture that had come from nowhere; and Max, Elsa's true Max, had lied, nay, had perjured himself to her while her hands rested trustingly on his shoulder, and her eyes were looking straight into his own. Here, then, was the secret of his altered ways—not hard work, not anxiety for Elsa's sake, but a strange woman whose very name he had not dared to

mention in her ears, and to conceal whose very existence he had taken the name of love itself in vain. What was the worth now of anything he had ever vowed to her? Gentle as she was, Elsa was not one to let herself be trampled upon by a rival, even if that rival were a queen. She drew up her small figure to its full height, and, poor little *bourgeoise* though she was, looked steadfastly upon her magnificent rival, without flinching, though her heart felt breaking in two.

As for Max, who knew how little any real woman that could be visible to Elsa had to do with a shadow that was visible to himself alone, he knew not what to think, say, or do. What Elsa must think of it he could dimly guess, and yet it was impossible to explain at the moment, or indeed ever, without appearing to pile Pelions upon Ossas of extravagant perjuries. If he had only taken Elsa into his confidence at first, all might have been well; but it was too late now. He could only stare silently.

Meanwhile the lady herself, whoever she might be, stood gracefully just within the door and smiled graciously.

"Herr Max Brendel?" she asked, in a voice like the sound of glass bells struck lightly, so sweet, ringing, clear, yet far away did it seem. "Silence gives assent, does it not? And as nobody answered I supposed I might come in. Forgive me, though,

if I am one too many. Mademoiselle is a model, I suppose? I congratulate you on finding one so pretty. I came——"

"*I* am no model, madame, and it is I am one too many," broke out poor Elsa, the preacher of patience, unable to contain herself longer in the presence of such hypocrisy. "Herr Max Brendel" indeed!—as though she, whose portrait he had been a whole month in painting, did not know her painter's name! Then, fearful of breaking down before her rival and her false lover, she hurried from the room, ran home, threw herself on her bed, and moaned. Hitherto she had been a very April of ready tears and smiles—but now the tears came hard, as though their fountain had been scorched dry.

IX.

"You have not told me yet," said the lady, with her brightest smile, "if I really have the honour of speaking with Herr Max Brendel? But you need not tell me—you have a painter's eyes. I am come, I was about to say, to thank in person the young artist who has honoured me by staking his earliest success upon the merits of my poor features. Let me be the warmest, if not the first, in my congratulations. I saw your work in the

Rath-haus—I mistook it for a Titian, and I ought to know. I assure you that my friends from Munich were glowing with your praises: you will hear from them again before long. Meanwhile, let me be your first patron, if you don't object to my taking a title that honours me more than you. The old castle must have a gallery, and I long to inaugurate my reign there with the first picture of the already great, the future famous master, Max Brendel. Set your own value upon me, and let myself be my own."

At first he thought that the vision of the mirror must have taken substance; but her mention of the old castle showed her to be only the newly-arrived foreign baroness of Herr Elias. If so, in spite of the startling coincidence, she was real flesh and blood, and not the fetch of a phantom: and in that case he might be bold enough to use his tongue. He bowed.

"I am Max Brendel, gracious lady. For your praise I will not try to thank you. The face came to me—I know not how—but it was yours, and how could I fail to succeed when so inspired? Never did I paint like that before—never, something tells me, shall I be able to paint like that again." Now that his tongue was loosed, it seemed quite natural to find himself talking to one whose face and form had filled his heart and mind for so long, and who, though a stranger, was already his most

familiar friend. Even her voice was too much in harmony with her crystalline beauty to sound strange after it had once pronounced his name. Even such was the voice of which he had dreamed in connection with his shadow, and which he had already essayed in vain to hear. "But, alas!" he went on, "I would let you have the picture willingly as a gift if it were my own — you have already more than paid me for a life's work—but it is a rule that the prize-painting becomes the property of the town."

"A foolish, unjust rule, Herr Brendel. It means that you have sold for—what was it?—a wretched five hundred gulden what would have fetched at least five thousand in Munich, or Paris, or Florence, or Moscow. You have let the town cheat you, Herr Brendel. Five hundred gulden may be something to a poor and clever student: it is an insult to a master. But we will have our revenge. Paint me a *replica* for five thousand gulden. I have set my heart on that picture, and the copy shall be better even than the original, for I will sit to you in person this time."

Her voice was as sweet as the flattery of self-praise. More than this, her offer enabled him to purchase the mirror without giving up his journey to Rome. But where was the thought that should have come first—"Five thousand gulden! I can marry Elsa now without going to Rome"? A

month ago he would have fallen on his knees and worshipped the bearer of such a gift from heaven to Elsa and to him. And he was fain to worship; but not for Elsa's sake, and not wholly for his own. He had not studied for weeks the mute secrets of such lips and eyes in vain. Now that the lips were no longer mute, he felt that he both heard and saw the incarnation of his dream.

She was, indeed, transcendently beautiful—to him; and then he had never seen her smile before. There was the same exquisite symmetry of form and feature, the same diamond sheen of hair, the same transparent rose in her cheek, the same wonderful depth in her speaking eyes. Her tall and graceful though fragile figure, hitherto unseen, her noble bearing, her musical voice, and her gracious words, were new and crowning charms. He bent forward and kissed her hand.

"Be all things as you will, gracious lady," he said; "but let no money come between the artist and his inspiration—his first inspiration. I will do all things for you."

She smiled upon him yet more winningly.

"But I must insist on my part of the bargain, my dear Herr Max. The less an artist cares for wealth, the more his purse should be thought of by others. It is only a trifle—what are five thousand gulden, what are five hundred thousand, between me and you? I offer you a swift and sure

way to glory, which you covet more than wealth—be it yours to show your gratitude by letting me make you rich besides. Your biographers shall not write of your first patroness that she preyed upon your genius like a vampire—that she devoured your heart's blood and gave you no reward. They shall call me the generous friend as well as the keen-eyed connoisseur—I too have my ambitions, my vanities, my whims, and that is one.—Ah! what is this?" she asked, looking at the canvas. "You have already begun upon me a second time?"

"Oh, gracious lady, that is nothing," said Max, half-confused. "Only when one's mind is full of a subject to overflowing it runs out into many forms; it is a poor theme that one can exhaust in a single picture—and this——"

"*Au revoir*, then. To-morrow, at this hour, I will come again, and we will begin in earnest."

His prayer, if such it could be called, for a short cut to fame and fortune, had indeed been answered. Already, without having gone to Rome, his fame had been carried to Munich by his judges, and he was being launched into the wide ocean of art by one who was as munificent as she was beautiful, and had already mistaken him for Titian. He was, indeed, no longer the same Max Brendel. His hopes for a long struggle in order to wring domestic happiness with a simple girl from the unwilling hands of unfavourable fortune seemed inexpressibly

poor and mean. He was still betrothed to Elsa, of course, and must marry her in time, however much his *bourgeoise* wife, a common journeyman's daughter, might stand in the way of a life-journey that led him among baronesses—that would lead him soon among the princes of art, and, in time, among the princes of this world. Titian was the friend of an emperor; and, in a word, what with past despair, present triumph, and future glory, the head of Max Brendel was fairly turned. If it had not been so, the mirror itself would have been less wonderful. It is well for men that their successes, for the most part, come slowly, late, and tempered with much alloy; when they come all at once, and in the very outset of youth, they act like furious wine.

That same evening a messenger from Regenstein brought him, in a sealed envelope, notes for five thousand gulden, with one line of writing: "From my left hand to my right—a contribution to the biography of a connoisseur." He scarcely comprehended the words, but he gathered that the donor would accept of no refusal, and delicately wished him to feel that she was merely gratifying a caprice of her own in paying him before his work was begun. Well, then, he must work for her all the more devotedly, that was all, and Rome must be out of the question while she needed him. Down he went at once to Herr Elias, with a note for five hundred gulden in his hand.

"That is for the mirror," he said.

"Aha! you pay promptly, my good Herr Max," said Herr Elias, as he examined the note. "Eh, eh! this comes from Castle Regenstein—you are in luck's way, my good young gentleman, if you have dealings there. And to get a glass like that for five hundred gulden—that happens not every day! But you deserve it, my good Herr Max: you pay your debts down on the nail, not like that rogue of a Meyer, who is in such a hurry to leave the world that he does not wait to pay me my little bill."

"Meyer? What has he done?"

"How? Have you not heard? He has drowned himself, that's all; nothing more, my good Herr Max—nothing more."

"Good heaven!——"

"Yes, my good Herr Max. In the water. They found his hat swimming an hour ago—a very bad hat indeed. Not worth two kreutzers, on my word. But I can do it up, my good Herr Max; and if you want a hat for Sundays——"

But Max was gone. He ran out and hurried straight to Meyer's lodging. It was only too likely that the diseased temper of the young man, full of all the weakness of genius and wanting all its strength, should, in the first frenzy of exaggerated disappointment, have led him to suicide. He had never fought against an impulse, and he had staked

his whole career upon the prize. Max almost felt responsible for his rival's death, even though his conscience, in this matter, was clear.

Arrived at Meyer's lodging he found the news only too true. Rothkopf and Sleinitz, walking along the river-side, had caught sight of a black hat floating down the stream. It was carried by an eddy into a bed of rushes, whence Rothkopf amused himself by hooking it to shore. He recognised it at once—it contained his practical joke of the laurel crown. Then it came out that the unlucky Meyer had returned from the competition in a half-crazed condition, had said no word to a soul, had gone to his room for an instant or two, had hurried out again, as the servant said, like a wild man, and had never returned.

He had no friends in the place, and his habits were so retired and reserved that nobody knew whether he had any relations anywhere, much less where they were to be found. Max knew him better than anybody, and he, under the circumstances, took upon himself the duty of searching Meyer's rooms in order to find out any possible clue to the whereabouts of his family. That it was a case of suicide none could doubt for a moment. The hat was evidence of his having been in the river; and the stream was so swift and strong that even a good swimmer would have found it hard to escape, much more a feeble lad like Meyer, who did

not know how to swim. That the body, in spite of search, had not been found, proved nothing: so strong a current would soon have carried it many miles away. But assurance became doubly sure when Max found the following note, scrawled in pencil, pinned to a pillow:—

"Know all men that I, Adolf Meyer, the painter, have been conquered by sorcery. I accuse Max Brendel of being in league with the devil. I quit with scorn and loathing a world where genius has to contend with infernal powers, and I go to find my glory where the work of wizards hath not to be judged by fools. Seek for the body of Adolf Meyer beneath the river; for his soul above the stars.—A. M."

So it was clear that the poor crazy soul had gone mad on the first provocation, and had died. But much was due to his memory at the hands of Max Brendel. The authorities, though slowly moving, would soon arrive to seal the room. The incoherent piece of writing would assuredly condemn its author to the burial of a self-murderer; while the Prophetess herself, who, still under her canvas cover, lay upon the floor, would be overhauled by ignorant and careless hands and insulted by mocking tongues. The successful man, who had unconsciously driven his rival to a grave in the river, was bound to do all he could for Meyer's immediate memory and future reputation. He felt no hesita-

tion in at once destroying the scrawl, and in conveying the Prophetess, without lifting her veil, to his own lodging. He was the natural guardian of all that might conduce to shed any sort of halo on the head of one who would still have been living but for him. Perhaps, too, Meyer's relations, when discovered, might prove to be poor people, to whom the Prophetess might be of service. Meanwhile it would be safe in his keeping from being seen prematurely. He sealed the cover and placed the picture against the wall.

Of course all this kept him from going at once to make his peace with Elsa. Indeed his mind was in such a whirl that he hardly realised the breach between himself and her. He counted his remaining four thousand five hundred gulden and then turned to the looking-glass, the abode of his familiar spirit, to thank the shadow of the donor and to gaze upon her beauty with tenfold rapture.

The face was gone. He saw only his own reflection, just as he would have seen it in the commonest of toilet mirrors. Five hundred gulden had proved a long price to pay.

Never mind, though—he could afford it, and gratitude was not to be measured by gulden. Moreover, if he had lost the shadow, he had gained the substance. His patroness was real and he was sane: he lived in a mere dream no more.

X.

In one respect, however, it is a question whether his recovered sanity was quite so much an advantage as he supposed. When one loves a dream, the love is a dream: when the dream one loves becomes a reality, the love also becomes real.

He was still Elsa's betrothed: she still wore his ring, though it now scorched and pained her. But his daily visits to the Baroness could not fail to exercise over him a perilous fascination. Cowardice, though he had never hitherto shown himself a coward, was the all-powerful cause of his putting off a reconciliation with his betrothed, first from hour to hour, and then from day to day. He had never known a great lady in his life before; and the Baroness was to the poor student the princess of a fairy tale. The very perfume of her dress intoxicated him. Then she had none of the commonplace prettiness of Elsa: she wore the beauty of a loftier world. She was a goddess: Elsa only a girl. And she could talk to his mind as well as to his heart: she could sympathise with his higher ideas, and give wings to his brains.

There were strange things about her that enhanced her fascination, even though he, in his ignorance, failed to think them strange. Why should so brilliant a being have come to bury her beauty and her youth in a half-ruined castle in so

out-of-the-way a corner? Why did she live alone? Why was she content with his society? Perhaps the last question would have puzzled no other man. But these were not her most striking peculiarities. She had a singular horror of darkness, and surrounded herself with a brilliant illumination of wax-candles almost before the sun went down. Her very bedchamber at midnight was a blaze of artificial day. She had no feminine taste for flowers, or for the living and vocal flowers called birds; but she indulged an intense passion for all that gleamed and sparkled—for diamonds and jewels of every sort and kind. In accordance with this passion, her rooms were lined throughout with mirrors from floor to ceiling—the old castle should have been the very Palace of Truth itself for transparency. From the ceiling of every inhabitable room hung a large chandelier composed of prismatic lustres; and she ate and drank from the richest workmanship of Venice and Prague. The nature of her mind itself was that of a mirror. It was startlingly quick and bright: no sooner was an idea presented to her than she instantaneously reflected it and made it her own. But, unless kept constantly and prominently before her, it passed away, as utterly as if it had never been, from the surface of her mind. Nor did she ever originate, though taking the keenest delight in, new ideas. Whenever Max spoke she became all eyes and

ears. Perhaps it was well for the peace of his vanity that he never met her in the company of other men, and that she had nothing to reflect but the lights and shades of his own mind. Sometimes he could not help flattering himself that the interest she took in him must be due to something more personal and definite than a passion for art in the abstract. Once he caught himself thinking aloud, "If it were not for Elsa, what things might not be!" And, even as things were, there seemed no reason why Elsa should interfere, seeing that he had not seen her since — since — he could not remember when.

There was one barrier, however, between them— while she reflected every movement of his soul, he could not see into hers. It was himself that he seemed to read in her. Even when their hands met, there seemed a thin, indefinable something— like a perfectly smooth surface without depth— that came between and prevented an actual contact. Her touch added no thrill to his own.

The second portrait of the Baroness had now long been finished. As she had foretold, it was better than even his prize picture: and she sent it to be exhibited for a few days in the *Rath-haus*, so that it might eclipse its predecessor. All the town was proud of its citizen, Herr Max Brendel, whose fame had now travelled to Munich and back again: and everybody said that this was *the* master-

piece: that the first had been only the promise of the second. Max Brendel was a prophet in his own country.

The Baroness was delighted to reflect all this public praise. She gathered up the opinions of everybody, and agreed with them all.

"There," she said, "was I not right? You must make me another picture for the old castle before you go to Rome. You shall make Regenstein the most famous gallery in all Germany."

His heart rose up with pride.

"Only give me a subject, madam," he said, "and I will not rest day or night till it is done."

"A subject? Well—you have painted Me twice over, and the second was better than the first. Paint me a third time—the third time will be best of all."

"I can find no more glorious subject, madam, if I wander through the world."

So he set himself to make a third and yet grander picture of the Baroness. She was his inspiration, and he was nothing without her.

XI.

Meanwhile it must not be supposed that the black, worm-eaten, rat-eaten old lumber-room of Herr Elias was any longer large or fine enough

to hold Herr Brendel and his fortunes. The Baroness hated all things dark and dull; and, thanks to her extravagant liberality, he was now able to live in a style more in accordance with her tastes, which had become his own. At her direct instigation he moved to another part of the town and into expensive apartments. She wished her *protégé* to do credit to his patroness and to advertise her munificence — nothing that she did was to be hid under a bushel—and her wishes were his laws. He obeyed willingly—all he had came from her, and she had therefore a moral right to control its disposal. Here, in his new abode, he painted *en prince;* and here he did other things *en prince* besides. The steady-going and blameless young fellow whom Elsa had called Max was very unlike the famous Herr Brendel.

He had sown his modest crop of wild oats in his time, of course, in company with the Rothkopfs and Sleinitzes of the painting-school. He had never, before his betrothal to Elsa, been averse to such simple forms of dissipation as a poor art-student might light upon in a town that was free from the cheap and easy opportunities given by great cities. But his life assumed a different shape, now that the light touch of Elsa's hand was removed. Whether it was that whenever he thought of her he was filled with shame, or whether the influence of his generous benefactress was in itself a power of evil,

there is no need to say, and no means of saying. One thing led on to another. The friend of a Baroness, whose fame had travelled to Munich and back again, could not plod on like poor Max Brendel. All the great painters had lived magnificently—Titian, Rubens, Raphael—and should Brendel give himself any lower example than the highest of all? Even in the most obscure of towns, if a man is bent upon it, he may contrive to launch out in style. Max Brendel launched out in the style of a lion.

Indeed he was really a lion. He dined with the Burgomaster, and painted for him a small picture of the Baroness in the character of Justice. He lectured in the painting-school, to which he condescended to present a sketch of the Baroness in the character of Clio. He sent to Munich a great picture of the Baroness as St Catherine: he sent another great picture of the Baroness, as Thusnelda, to Berlin. He received several commissions from those who admired his finished style, and his patrons regularly received a portrait of the Baroness, in some new character, in return. Foreign visitors came with letters of introduction to Herr Professor Brendel. He restored to the Academy the prize he had gained, and the student who had painted the modest landscape was sent to Rome. He was invited to leave his native town and to settle in a larger field, but he always refused:

patriotism was the excuse, but the Baroness was the cause. He gave dinners that outdid the Burgomaster's, with wine that outshone the Bishop's. No longer did he associate with those honest comrades of his, Sleinitz and Rothkopf. He spoke to them kindly when he came across them, but was hail-fellow-well-met with them no more.

Well, such things happen every day. There is not much to wonder at in a poor man's suddenly becoming rich and cutting his old friends. There is very little to wonder at in a great painter, who has become a lion, finding it practically impossible to marry a poor little *bourgeoise*. He and Elsa were no longer in the same world. What would they all say—what would the Baroness say? It was all over between them now.

"And so best, I suppose," he sometimes thought with a sigh.

XII.

In one thing he had an advantage over many great men—he was not troubled by the ghosts of his humbler days. There was no fear of his being intruded upon by Elsa now, though she had once come to him when he ought to have gone to her.

The long absence of her lover was a confirmation of her worst fears: and at last it was impossible even for her to force herself to believe that she had

judged him harshly. It was only too true, too clear, that her short-lived dream of happiness was past and gone.

Not that she spent her time in crying her eyes out. No one saw her shed a tear. Herr Frohmann never had occasion to scold her even for breaking crockery, much less for inattention to his slightest comfort. To all appearance she was as quiet as a mouse and as busy as a bee. Her smiles had gone away with her tears, but she allowed nobody to miss her smile. She did not turn cynic or cry out to all the fates and furies because she had found her trust betrayed—because she shared the common lot in finding the citadel of her life built upon a shoal of shifting sand. Her heart might break, but neither her strength nor her pride.

"Elsa, my girl," said her father to her one evening, when, even in the workshop, he had heard Max Brendel's name spoken of with honour, "I hear great things of that Max of thine. What has become of the fellow? From all I hear, he ought to be thinking of speaking to me about the wedding-day."

She crept to him and laid her hand on his shoulder, with the caress that had belonged to her lover in old times. She had been expecting the question to come at last, but was still unprepared with a reply.

"Ah, you think I've been blind, my girl," he

said in his rough way, "but I'm not so blind as I seem. I've been waiting for you to speak first, but as you won't, I must take the bull by the horns. Max has never been here since he got the prize; and what's more, they say he's to marry the Baroness up at Regenstein—they were talking about it to-day. And he's turned bad and wild. Elsa Frohmann, the daughter of old Frohmann the wood-carver, isn't fit for the Herr Professor. Never mind, my girl—thank God, we're as proud as he; and we won't speak to those who are bad, if he won't speak to those that are poor. And there's as good fish in the river as ever a Max Brendel."

It was one thing to condemn her lover, but it was another thing to hear him condemned.

"Father," she said, "it's true—all's over between Max and me. But it's not his fault, father: how could a great and clever man like him really care for a poor, plain, clumsy girl like me? It was all very well while he was poor and unhappy, and had seen nobody but Elsa. But it couldn't last—how could it? It was too sweet a dream; one always wakes, always, from sweet dreams. It must have come to an end," she went on, with the tears at last brimming into her eyes; "and better now than if we had married and he'd found out too late that he could not love me as—as I loved him.—Now I must be thy Elsa, thine only,

my own father — that's all: I would not have him unhappy for my sake, no, not for all the prizes in the world; and now, I would not leave thee—no, not for him."

"He's a blackguard, that's all, Elsa, and thou art a little fool. But if thou canst forget him, thou art wise. Take off that ring."

"No—not that, father. I must keep my ring."

"It is shameful to wear it longer, if thou art his betrothed no more. Give it me, that I may send it back to the Herr Professor."

"Oh, let me be thy Elsa, father; and I cannot be thy Elsa if I am untrue to my betrothed—to my Max who is dead and gone." At last, for the first time, she broke down: she fell upon her father's neck and cried.

"Who has turned into a scoundrel," he said, gruffly. But he said no more about the ring.

XIII.

In the course of every tale of real life there arrives a period when matters develop themselves eventlessly, and without any landmark to denote the unhalting process of time. It is as needless, as it would be impossible, to chronicle all the interviews that took place between Max Brendel and his strange patroness. Let it suffice to say

that they gradually, but not slowly, led to the one inevitable end. Max loved the Baroness more than he loved his own soul—and found himself in debt up to the ears.

His chief creditor, the broker and money-lender, Herr Elias, was not impatient: he only used to grin and say, "A little longer, eh, eh, my good Herr Professor? With pleasure. All goes well at Regenstein?" But Love was not so patient a usurer.

One morning, after putting the last touch to his famous Holy Family with the Baroness for Madonna, hope whispered courage to his heart. After all, why should he fear? He was greater in the aristocracy of art than the Baroness in the aristocracy of birth: marriage would be neither presumption on his side nor condescension on hers. He thought over all her gracious ways to him, the pleasure she obviously took in his society, their sympathy in heart and mind. He must put his fate to the touch sooner or later, and why not now? She must have read that he loved her in every look and word; and if she favoured him, as he could not doubt, she must have set him down as the most timid or as the coldest of lovers not to have opened his heart to her long ago. It was on a glorious morning of early spring, bright with the fragrant sunshine that sinks deep and calls forth blades of love even where none is sown,

that he threw down his palette, and, following a conscious and deliberate impulse, found himself at Regenstein.

But, as ill luck would have it, for the first time during the whole course of his acquaintance with his patroness, her French *femme de chambre* told him she was engaged, and asked him to wait a while. He was shown, accidentally of course, into the ante-chamber of the Baroness's favourite boudoir. The inner door, however, stood ajar, so that one of the innumerable mirrors wherewith the whole castle was lined reflected to the eyes of Max all that passed within. The companion of the Baroness was no other than the little old parchment-skinned man with the croaking voice, who had been foremost in awarding the travelling prize to Number Five. How inexpressibly far off that seemed! — and yet, far off as it was, he would have been more or less than man had not the sunshine of to-day sent a pang through his heart. Memory, as well as hope and love, is awakened by the fragrance of such sunshine.

But it was too late now, even though conscience whispered that the full voice of the new love was not worth a whisper of the old.

He was not a willing listener to a conversation that was not intended for him. He did not, like Sleinitz, deliberately put his eye or ear to the door, but he took for granted that the Baroness

was aware of his presence, and he was certain that she had no secrets from him. He made a noise with his chair to warn her that he was within ear-shot, but it made no difference, and the talk buzzed on. The first few words he did not hear; but suddenly his hearing was sharpened by catching his own name.

"Max Brendel, of course," said the bell-like voice of the Baroness.

"Max Brendel, yes—but not of course," croaked the other. "Not of course, by any means. If we had not thought of Max Brendel, I should not be here. But, for my own part, I am no longer disposed to give *carte blanche* to Max Brendel."

"And what is wanted?" asked the Baroness. "I don't quite understand."

"A subject for a fresco. One of a series, representing the great themes of German history. We need variety in treatment—unity in plan. I have undertaken to furnish two designs—I flatter myself that a series of national historical pictures without my hand would be like the English tragedy of Hamlet without the title *rôle*. My colleague has undertaken three more. But we must have a third hand."

"And that must be——"

"So my colleagues said to the committee—Max Brendel. But the committee shook their heads. 'We are sick of your Max Brendel,' they said.

'His first picture was the revelation of a new genius. His second was its confirmation. His third was a *chef-d'œuvre*. But tell us honestly,' they said to me, 'if that great genius of yours has ever really painted more than one picture in all his days? Is it not'—pardon me, madam: I quote the committee—'Is it not for ever and ever the same eternal woman with the yellow hair? She has done duty now for Clio, for Thusnelda, for Justice, for St Catherine, — in short, for as many pictures as he has painted, all as like one another as a family of peas in one shell. He puts a costume on a lay figure, paints it, and then sticks on at top his stock head with the yellow hair. The journals,' said the committee, 'are beginning the same cry; and though art-critics are no authorities when they speak for themselves, they show how the wind blows. When the fresco is finished, people must be struck by it in the right way: they mustn't only say, Oh, that's a Brendel; that's his yellow-haired woman: we've seen all that before, thank you. Max Brendel has painted himself out; we've had enough of him.'"

The Baroness always at once reflected everybody and everything. She did so now.

"I understand," she said. "They think him a man of one idea."

"Precisely, madam. Now, as a rule, the public likes a man with one idea. It can't comprehend a

man's having two. Its comedian must stick to comedy; its tragedian to tragedy; its pianist, who has once made a hit by playing variations with one finger, must never use two fingers; its singer, with a high C, must sing nothing but high C's; its painter, who has once painted blue, must paint everything blue, or be hissed down. That's the division of labour. One man paints blue, another red, another yellow, and the public likes it better than if the same man painted all three. But there is a limit to all things, and to that limit Max Brendel has come. He not only harps on the same string—that's nothing—but he has worn out the string he harps on. We are getting disappointed with Max Brendel, madam—bitterly disappointed; and we won't have our series of frescoes spoilt by a howling chorus of 'Oh, that's a Brendel; he can paint yellow—but a grand historical fresco, that's not his line.' So I came down to ask him for a design; and if—pardon me, madam, if I seem blunt,—if he gives me the yellow-haired woman again, he is—done for."

Max felt himself turn cold from head to foot. Nobody knew better than himself that he was in truth an impostor with but one idea, and that not his own.

"Would you like to see Herr Brendel at once?" asked the Baroness. "I believe he is here."

"Thank you, madam, but I would rather call on

him," croaked this raven voice of public opinion. "I am charmed to have found you at Regenstein, and will not fail to renew my respects to you before I return to Munich."

He passed out through the ante-chamber; but he was near-sighted, and did not recognise Max, who, since his former judge last saw him, had altered in many ways.

Max entered the boudoir gloomily. The Baroness did not smile upon him as of old.

"You did not notice that gentleman?" she asked. "That is another great man—I made him, old as he is, just as I made you. But he is a man of many ideas, and has done me credit, though he never painted me, my own self, as you have done."

"You need not tell me what he said," answered Max; "I heard it all. But oh, Baroness, I did think you would have defended me more warmly. How could any man with a soul ever paint anybody but you? Did I not see you in every sight, nay, in every sound? It is true I paint nothing but you. But what did Rubens paint but his wife, what Titian but his mistress, what Raphael but his one Madonna—and are they stale? And should I, whom you once called your Titian, grow stale because I also paint only my mistress, only my Madonna, only the one queen of my soul?"

The rose-leaf flush deepened in her cheek, and

her eyes grew no longer hard to read. Hitherto she had only glittered like crystal, now he could see that she was woman-souled.

She even trembled. "I worship you," he rushed on; "I love you. Your breath is my life. Even before I knew you I loved you."

More than ever he saw himself reflected in her. "Oh Max!" she exclaimed as he grasped her hand that seemed at last to melt and thaw, "this is too much happiness for a poor, cold, lonely, miserable heart like mine—to be loved for myself, just like the simplest girl! Is it true—is it only for myself you love me—for nothing more?"

Something reminded him of Elsa's look when he first told her he loved her years ago. But there was more than the look of Elsa.

"My empress! For your own self—nothing more."

"And," she asked suddenly and eagerly, "it was love for me that inspired you?"

"That alone."

"And you will do all things for me?"

"All things."

"Then," she said triumphantly, "we will beat them all, Max, as we have beaten them before. I will be proud of you; you shall win me in battle, as ladies were won by knights of old. You heard what was said just now? Heaven knows I love you, Max—but, now that I am only a woman to

you, I must be won. Prove to them all that you are the greatest of all painters, and I am yours."

"Have I not proved it? Has not my brush made you famous through all the world?"

There needs no subtle research into the heart of a woman like the Baroness to comprehend how her all-reflecting soul, that received and echoed every breath that fell upon her from without, needed to believe firmly before she could submit even to her own heart's mastery. She might delight to honour a poor student whom a whole town praised, but she could not yield herself wholly even to the man she loved unless he were honoured by all the world. The character is common enough—at least among the many who are not Elsas. Of such sort was the poor lady who forced the knight Dunois to fetch her glove from among the bears and lions: love was not worth having, was in fact incredible, until it was amply proved and justified openly in the face of herself and of all others. Such weakness is not ignoble; and the large-hearted have never had much sympathy with the brave but little-minded and rough-fisted Dunois.

"Yes," she answered him, "you have made me famous; but it is not I who must be famous—it is you. You have sacrificed your own proper fame for mine. They must not say that but for his wife Max Brendel would have been nothing. Thy wife, Max, must reflect thy glory. While I am only thy

muse I am not the wife thou must look down upon and lift up to thee. It is not the love I long for if I am not a wife as other women are."

"How?" asked Max; "you love me—and yet I must sketch a wretched design for a fresco before love may have its way?"

"No—not that. But wilt thou refuse me so small a thing?"

"I will refuse thee nothing. It shall be done. And then——"

"And then I am thine." After all, the condition seemed light enough. "Thou wilt make a design for this fresco, for my sake, from which I shall be absent, to prove thy love for me: to show thou canst do a little more for me than for thy prize."

XIV.

The parchment-skinned painter from Munich duly called upon Max Brendel, and, of course without referring to his conversation with the Baroness, proposed that Max should send in a design for the new fresco, the choice of a subject being left to his own taste and discretion.

"I cannot offer you a direct commission," he said; "but you are young, and you have plenty of time. Only strike out a new line."

Max also learned something about the Baroness.

"We painters," said his visitor, "know her well, and poets and musicians also. She has a great soul. Most artists, if they are worth anything, come across her in their time. Why she has come here, I know not—but she has many whims. Farewell, Herr Brendel; and let the fresco be your *chef-d'œuvre* of *chefs-d'œuvre*. Much depends on it —more perhaps than you know."

"Much indeed," thought Max; "more than *you* can know."

And so, once more, he set himself to create an original idea.

Alas! no force of will was able to project another baroness upon a looking-glass again. That wonder belonged to the days when he had vowed his soul to gain Elsa. His creative power was just as barren as of old, even when spurred by the hope of this second and greater prize. He knew that without the Baroness he was nothing, and despaired even before he fairly began. Fame, wealth, and love had no longer to be acquired but to be retained by his performance of a feat of which he was simply incapable. Not only would he be denounced by the parchment-skinned old raven to a hundred jealous rivals as a one-ideaed impostor who could only paint from a single model and a lay figure, but he would lose that to which glory was nothing. He no longer tried the frantic experiments that he had put in practice on the former occasion—he was

wiser now, and had proved their vanity. It is no use spurring a horse that has no legs to go. One thing he could do now that he could not do then, and only one—he poured out and drank down a huge goblet of Rhone wine, whose far-reaching influence would have called genius from a rock of granite had it contained one spark of true fire to set free. But there was not a spark, and the draught only heated without fertilising his brain.

"Am I a man," he thought, as he passed backwards and forwards before the mirror that now reflected nothing but his own form; "and do not the proverb-mongers say that what man has done man may do? Is anything more easy in this world of fools than to keep even a false reputation that has once been gained? Why should I be an exception, when the life of my soul hangs upon the preservation of my fame? Did I not once say I would sell my soul?" he added, with a bitter smile. "I think the fiend heard me—and this is how he has kept his word. I have gained all I longed for—wealth, fame, and—and—love; quickly come, quickly gone. The cup is dashed from my lips, and I have won all to lose more. Ah, she is right to impose tests and conditions upon a miserable impostor like me! Adolf Meyer was right—this is sorcery, and I have sold my truth, my conscience, for an old looking-glass and a dream."

"Eh, eh! my good Herr Max! Goes all well at Regenstein?"

"Who admitted you, pray? Did they not tell you I am engaged—in study?"

"Pardon me, my good Herr Max. I did not know."

"Then you do now. Please leave me alone. When I want you I know the way to the *Adler Gasse*."

"That I am not so sure, my good Herr Max. I prefer for once to come to you. Ah, it is a long, long, long time since you have come to see old Elias; a very long time. But meantime interest has a knack of trotting and compound interest of galloping, till—well, well, my good Herr Max, I must live, and, if you please, I have called to let you see my little bill. 'Tis as low as may be, my good Herr Max, on my word."

"Interest—compound interest—your little bill? Confound your little bill! Haven't we renewed everything?"

"That was long, long ago, my good Herr Max, and when all was well at Regenstein."

"What do you mean, you old rascal? What have my dealings with you to do with Regenstein?"

"Eh, eh! my good—nothing at all. I only want a trifle on account of my little bill."

"Well, let me see how we stand, then. Fifty thousand gulden! *Potztausend noch e' mal!* Do I owe fifty thousand gulden? Impossible!"

"Even so do things mount up, my good Herr Max. Fifty thousand gulden. That is all."

"Then I can't pay you a penny. I've got nothing to give and nothing to say."

"Then—it troubles me, my good Herr Max; but I will take some little portable article you can spare."

"Take anything you like, but for heaven's sake leave me alone."

"Thank you, my good Herr Max. I will."

The broker's eyes wandered round the room, and at last fell on the mirror.

"I think I will take that to-day," he said.

"Take the accursed thing and begone."

"For twenty gulden. Now you owe me only forty-nine thousand nine hundred and eighty. To-morrow I will come again."

"Twenty gulden! why, I gave you five hundred."

"Eh, eh! my good Herr Max! But think of the wear and tear—it is not what it used to be. I shall not sell it for more than twenty-one." With a low bow, he carried off the looking-glass under his arm.

So, then, not only would Max lose fame and love, but he would be a ruined man besides, if he failed to achieve this original idea.

He essayed sketch after sketch, thought after thought, but nothing would come. Everything depended upon the forced fertility of a barren soil. He laboured all night in vain. At last, in his

wanderings to and fro about his room, he was brought to a sudden stand.

There, in a forgotten corner, stood what he had seen, but what no other living eyes had seen—the sealed-up Prophetess of Adolf Meyer, "a great national historical fresco." There was the subject to his hand. His had been the soul of honour; but now a devilish temptation entered into the heart of the self-constituted guardian of Adolf Meyer's posthumous fame. In one word, without anybody being the wiser, he might use the Prophetess for his own.

In plainer words, he might plunder a dead man of the last remnant of his living soul; he might rob a rival's corpse and never be found out. Never had the impossibility of discovery so strongly tempted to so easy a sin. Max felt degraded in his own eyes by this unbidden impulse to cheat the world, the dead, and even her who loved him. But temptation is not conquered by so weak a thing as shame.

"The impossibility of discovery"—he himself had thought of the words. But, of all things, beware of what we call the Impossible! That is the one thing against which no man can guard —the only thing which, to judge from experience, is sure to arrive.

XV.

The body of Adolf Meyer was not beneath the river, however far his soul might be above the stars.

That unhappy young man, nevertheless, had acted precisely as Max had heard. He had gone home in a frenzy, had scrawled his raving *adieux* to fiends and fools, had dashed down the Prophetess on the floor, and had torn from the house like a wild man. Before long he reached the torrent of the Werda—the goal of all desperate cowards for many miles round. Life was blank if it had to be lived out in humiliation—better death than life without glory. It was the natural impulse of a weak soul filled to the brim with intense vanity intensely wounded, overwhelming disappointment, and all the confused crazes of a morbid genius that had scarcely yet overcome its birth-pang. He reached a conveniently precipitous point of the bank a little above the town, and threw himself into the glassy pool whence Lorelei has sung of peace and rest to many a feeble heart besides that of Adolf Meyer.

The deep, smooth, black, strong current of the Werda closed over him, and even if he had sought to save himself, he did not know how. No human help was at hand. But there was help of another kind. He rose, as a matter of course, after his

first plunge, and found his neck clasped so tightly that he could not sink again.

His position was almost ludicrous as well as painful: his neck was by no means embraced by the white arm of Lorelei. It was another drop in the cup of his humiliation to find his life saved so ignobly. Not that he tried to reject the unexpected help, for his plunge into cold water had considerably sobered his irresolute brain. He was saved for the time, but he was pilloried and half strangled.

When timber is felled in mountainous countries, it is the well-known practice, in order to save expense and trouble, to extemporise a rough and ready system of water-carriage by throwing the lopped stems into the nearest torrent and letting the cargo swim alone to its destination. Over rocks and rapids it goes, down waterfalls and through gorges, until, when the river widens, scores of floating trees jostle one another and make navigation not a little perilous. It was between two of these jostling stems that the hatless head of Adolf Meyer rose above water and was grasped as if in a vice, so tightly that it could not go down again.

It is not pleasant to find one's self throttled when one only intends to be drowned, even though the final result may be the same in both cases. But, when the first breach of the law of self-pre-

servation is over, the risk of being throttled becomes preferable to the certainty of being drowned. The genius thought but little of prize competitions while he felt himself whirled down the river by two stout pièces of timber that acted upon his jaws like a pair of nut-crackers. But he could breathe, which, under the circumstances, was everything; and he screamed out loudly for assistance as he swept along.

At last, after a miniature eternity, the current began to flow less rapidly, and the two logs, no longer kept together by its force, seemed likely to part company. Meyer's limbs were numbed, but he made a violent effort, weak as he was, and managed to get his breast over one of the logs, to which he clung with his arms. The stars were shining calmly over him, but he no longer yearned to be with them, now that his apotheosis was so uncomfortably near.

He kept his consciousness and his instinctive desire for life, but in time his hands and arms grew so cold that he was on the point of slipping back into the river when his log came into collision with some moving body, and he heard the sound of a hurried unshipping of oars.

"*Tausendwetter! Mutter Gottes!* 'Tis the Merman himself!" he heard a rough voice call out. "Pull off for our lives!"

"In heaven's name, help!" he gasped out:

"save me—I am drowning—I can hold on no longer!"

He had providentially, in the dangerous darkness of the night, nearly capsized a crew of honest and kindly though superstitious fishermen. Having convinced themselves that the half-drowned painter was not the Merman, they, with some risk and difficulty, got him on board, dosed him with Kirschwasser, rowed him to shore, and finally deposited him between a pair of hot blankets at a little village inn.

He was cared for with a zealous kindness that need not be underrated because his pockets were found to be fairly well lined. But he carried no evidence of who he was or whence he came; and when he awoke next morning in a high fever, he was as lost to the world as if he had actually succeeded in carrying out his intention of suicide. When he was at last able to ask questions and understand answers, he learned that he had been carried by the river many long leagues away, while his fever had borne him many weeks down the stream of time.

He invented some sufficient excuse to account for his having been found in the river, procured another hat, divided the rest of his purse among the fishermen who had saved him from the river and the good Samaritans who had nursed him through his fever, and then, though still pitiably weak, took up his staff and wandered out into the world.

A mind like that of Adolf Meyer was not likely to be strengthened by a long illness, or rendered by his late adventures more capable of looking things in the face and making the best of them. All that had happened assumed exaggerated proportions in his eyes, till he felt like a sort of artistic outlaw. He wandered on and on, regardless of the flight of time, and guided only by the instincts and impulses of an always feeble and still fevered brain that sought neither to realise nor to remember, until one day, in the capital of a far-off land, his memory was roughly called to life again.

It was by the sight, in a shop-window, of the engraving of a "Saint Catherine."

"Where have I seen that picture before?" he thought dimly. "No—it is not the picture—it is the face only I have seen. When?—where? It had golden hair—dark-grey eyes—a Cleopatra? —*Heilige Jungfrau!* The witch-face that blasted—

"My Prophetess!" all at once flashed in the form of a reality into his dazed brain. "My Prophetess, whom, heaven forgive me, I have left to make sport for the Philistines!"

The face of the Saint Catherine revived, in all their first acuteness, the events that had driven him out into the world through the gate of the Werda. He felt torn between two conflicting impulses: one called upon him to fly to some foreign land where he might bury his shame; the other

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besought him to return that he might ascertain the fate of the first-born of his brain, whom he still loved better than he knew

He decided to fly, and therefore—returned.

It was not difficult, even without a purse, to make his way homeward. Wandering students and apprentices might beg from richer wayfarers, according to the good old German custom, without shame, and were entitled to demand passing hospitality. So at last, sometimes joining himself to a party of travelling journeymen, sometimes alone, he was drawn back to the town where, if anywhere, the Prophetess was to be found.

Even now, however, he was without plan or aim. He was only haunting the scene of his troubles, like an aimless ghost from the other world, as if he were in truth the *revenant* of a suicide. Still, in order not to be recognised by any of his old acquaintance, he disguised himself so completely that Max Brendel himself, who knew him best, would have passed him by without knowledge. Heretofore he had been effeminately foppish in his dress and ways, and distinguished by his long, waving hair. During his fever his curls had been cut close to his scalp, and his beard had grown; his clothes had become shabby rags; and he looked like the ghost that in other respects he seemed to be. The pains he took to disguise himself were hardly required.

It was evening when he approached the outskirts of the town, once so familiar, now so strange. He was tired and weary, but his morbid fear of recognition forbade him to enter. He paused before the old castle of Regenstein: and a light in one of the windows caught his eye.

"Who can be living here?" he wondered. "It was an empty ruin in my time. They must be new-comers: in that case they will not know me, and may not, in any case, refuse to a penniless wanderer a night's lodging in an empty barn."

He rang loudly at the porter's bell, and was answered, as he had hoped, by a servant whose face he did not know.

"I am a poor traveller," he said boldly, and with something of the old vainglorious air that he could not disguise or lay aside. "The town-gates are closed by now, and as a stranger I don't know where to go. If the noble owner of Regenstein keeps a kennel or a stable, it would be charity to let me for to-night be the guest of a horse or hound."

"God forbid!" said the stout porter. "The lady of Castle Regenstein turns no poor traveller from *her* door. A night's shelter and a meal for all who cannot pay. Enter and welcome.—Why, man, you look something more than starved."

He followed the porter into the lodge, was supplied with bread and meat, and shown a loft in

which he might lie down. The porter, however, was a sociable and genial fellow; and, as the castle was a dull place for one who liked company, he asked the stranger to sit down with him and tell him the gossip of the wayside over a glass of ale before turning in. They were in the midst of their talk when the stranger's eyes fell upon something that lay on the table. Up he started as if he had been shot, and his close-cropped hair bristled on his skull.

"Heaven and earth!—how came *That* here?"

"What here?—What startles you, comrade?—*Sapperment!* You've saved me from a blowing-up, though, by calling my eyes to that while there's time. That was given me by my gracious lady to pack up and send to the owner four hours ago, and there it lies still. But it won't bite you, comrade, for all you look so scared. 'Tis what they call a sketch for a picture that's to be shown in the *Rathhaus* to-morrow before it goes to Munich, they say. That belongs to our great painter here, Herr Max Brendel, who'll be my lady's next husband, unless I'm wrong."

"Max Brendel—that sketch is by Max Brendel?"

"Yes—who else? He's to get thousands of gulden for it, they say, when it's all done. He's a great man, is Herr Max Brendel—a very great man. Pretty, isn't it?—Holloa, man! what is it now?"

"Let me out! let me go!" shouted Meyer; "I must be gone—instantly—I must see the Burgomaster! open instantly, fellow, and let me go!"

The porter stared, as well he might. "Fellow indeed! Are you mad, my man? You look like —— Holloa!—Fritz—Hans—Peter! Come quick, all of you—here's an escaped madman!"

But, before the fat porter could do more than call for assistance to secure the apparent lunatic, Meyer had dashed his fist through the window, had thrown it up, and was flying down the road towards the town.

XVI.

It was only too true. One thing had indeed led on to another. The introduction of one selfish element into Max Brendel's love for Elsa had led to the substitution of a shadow for a truth: this confusion of mind had led in due course to a vulgar greed for fame and gold, and for the gratification of all vain and selfish desires; and this, at last, to an act of mean treachery that could admit of no excuse or palliation. At the same time, however, it must not be thought that Max Brendel's mind made itself up without a struggle to commit an act of simple fraud. The influence of the Baroness was a sea upon which he drifted rather than steered: and,

when he sought to put his hand to the helm, it was with a vain attempt to steer clear from the moral perils of so treacherous a pool. Though about to be guilty of the grossest dishonour, he had never reached that final chaos of soul in which right and wrong are indistinguishable. His sympathies and his conscience remained with the right, though he was following the wrong. But then he had already been false to Elsa: and how could he ever bear to think of his falsehood to her if he had not only been false, but false in vain? If he had in truth sold his soul to the Demon of Dishonour, the only thing to be done now was to exact the purchase-money to the uttermost farthing. Over the struggles of a naturally honest man who finds himself impelled by passion and cowardice to what is unutterably base and mean, it is best, in pity, to throw a veil.

From the half-crazed genius Adolf Meyer and from the wretched Max Brendel, to return to the broken-hearted but brave and true-souled Elsa, is to emerge into loftier air, even though hers was but the eventless life of a half-educated girl to whose simplicity mental turmoils and moral complexities were things unknown. She still wore her ring, and that was the chief mark of all her days.

Otherwise, her events were the hours, seldom varied, at which her father went out to his daily work and came home again. She had ceased to look forward even to his scoldings.

One day—it was the morning following Adolf Meyer's visit to the Burgomaster—her father returned after the absence of no more than an hour, carrying a heavy parcel under his arm.

"What, father!" asked Elsa; "back so soon? It is not a holiday—and it has chimed but a quarter to ten. Nothing is wrong?"

"Only a quarter to ten? All the better, then. See here, Elsa—I have my work cut out for me at home to-day. It is on my own account this time, and as things are slack at the shop, I have got a holiday to do my own work in. Thou knowest Herr Elias, Elsa?—the little old chap with the black cap and white beard where Max Brendel used to—bah! what a fool I am!—well, you know. He wants a job of gilding done for Castle Regenstein. See here: what thinkest thou of that for a bit of wood-carving? That was never done in this country, I swear, since it wasn't done by me. Always saving my own, it's the handsomest I ever saw. And it's heavy too, Elsa—all real oak, for all its being so black—only feel! It's a shame to gild such carving: but everything must be the brightest gold and glass at the castle, they say, and all's grist to the mill."

Elsa took the heavily-framed mirror in her arms.

"*Potztausend!*" he said, "that's not the way to hold things—wilt thou never learn the use of thy hands? If it had fallen, there'd have been the

devil to pay. 'Twould take all I shall get from old Elias to put in a new glass, not to speak of damage to the frame—ay, and more than I shall get, too. That's dearer than coffee-cups.—There—so—easy with it on the floor.—Oh ten thousand fiends!"

With a crash, from Elsa's two left hands, down came the heavy mirror face downwards upon the brick floor. The frame was not injured; but the sheet of plate-glass, such as could not be procured within twenty miles, and which would cost the poor wood-carver all his wages to replace, shivered into a million atoms.

No wonder Herr Frohmann's patience failed him this time. He raised his hand and gave poor Elsa a ringing box on the ear.

"Twenty thousand demons!" he exclaimed. "Take that for thy two left hands!"

XVII.

It was the proudest day in all Max Brendel's outer life—the saddest of all in the life of his soul. All his world, including his adored patroness, was about to learn that hitherto he had confined himself to painting from one subject by deliberate preference, and not because he could not do something very different if he pleased.

It was understood that his new picture—"A German Prophetess after the defeat of Varus"—would be ready for visitors at about ten o'clock in the hall of the *Rath-haus*. But it was long since that hour had chimed from the cathedral when those whom curiosity had brought to the place of exhibition began to ask impatiently why the wonderful picture they had come to see and admire had not kept its appointment. Max Brendel, by the quiet force of character which in former days had made him king among his comrades, by his reputed wealth and his style of living, had got his fellow-townsmen to take an unusual interest in all that related to art—or at least in all that related to the artist of whose fame and apparent attachment to his native place they were so proud.

The Burgomaster, who had been fidgeting about ever since ten o'clock in uncharacteristic silence, was just about to send a messenger to inquire the cause of delay, when, at last, very grave and very pale, followed by two workmen bearing what was no doubt the Prophetess under a carefully-corded covering, Max entered the hall.

He bowed to the Burgomaster and then to the rest.

"Gentlemen," he said, in a low voice, "I must apologise for this delay. You will all pardon me, I am sure, when you hear all I have to say. You all know the destination of the picture you are

about to see and judge for yourselves. It has already been privately submitted to others of the best judges in all Germany, I may say in all Europe, and will in due time appear at Munich in the form of a fresco, where it will be seen by visitors from the whole world, and where it will throw, I trust and believe, yet greater glory upon the now famous school of our native town. I am entitled to forestall your criticisms by praising this picture warmly, for — it is *not* painted by Max Brendel. It is better, infinitely better, than anything I could do, if I tried until I died. Some of you remember a student here whose misplaced modesty cost him the prize of Rome. This is his picture, which none of you, which no man but one ever saw, but which I had seen and have preserved till to-day just as it came from his hands. This is the picture that should have gained the prize I won, thanks—or rather no thanks—to a technical breach on his part of the rules of our competition. But now, at last, his time has come. There are no arbitrary rules of competition here to aid modesty in defeating justice. *Palmam qui meruit, ferat.* Though the painter is dead, let the school that trained him be represented by the son of whose genius she has most cause to be proud. Gentlemen, recognition never comes too late to Genius—Genius never dies. Uncover the masterpiece of ADOLF MEYER."

"*Suum cuique tribuere!*" exclaimed the Burgomaster cordially, not gladly. He shook Max warmly by the hand. "We should have preferred otherwise, Herr Professor. But you know best, I suppose—in what concerns his own art let every man be believed. Not that I believe this, fine as it is, is better than you could have done if you pleased. You are right in one thing, though: I know at least one genius—as he turns out to be, though he's uncommonly like a madman—who doesn't seem able to die,—at least by water. Perhaps, though, he was born to be hanged." He waved his hand to his official beadle, who left the room.

The spectators crowded round the Prophetess, whose merits Max zealously explained. Neither they nor he saw the Burgomaster's messenger return. But he did return, and not alone; and at the end of some two minutes those who stood about the picture were roughly elbowed aside by a wild-looking young man, dressed like a wandering beggar, with a cropped head, rough beard, and large hollow eyes, whom none recognised, and who planted himself right in front of Max and looked him in the face scornfully.

"Herr Professor Max Brendel," he began, "you are an impostor, you are a charlatan, you are a liar, you are a thief, you are a swindler, you are a sorcerer, you are a traitor, you are an assassin,

you are a scoundrel. I am Adolf Meyer, who with my own hand painted that picture before which we meet again, and which you have stolen. Ah, a thief cannot look into the eyes of an honest man—well may Max Brendel hang his head like a cur before Adolf Meyer! Herr Burgomaster, I call upon this — this — Brendel, to state what private marks clearly show to whom the Prophetess belongs. I have already privately stated them to you, and my declaration is in your hands. You have admitted the test as conclusive proof, and so will all."

Max knew the shrill voice and wild eyes; and his blood turned cold. If he had not at the eleventh hour resolved to give up all things for the sake of being an honest man, he would have been convicted of deserving all the titles that Meyer had conferred upon him, and more! He felt like one who has just been saved from falling over a fatal precipice by the strength and breadth of a single hair. He hung his head for the shame that might have been. But he raised it at last, and smiled, though sadly.

"Yes," he said, "you are the Adolf Meyer whom we thought dead long ago. I, too, have made my statement—not privately, but before all. Silence, gentlemen, for one moment: tell me first, Herr Meyer, whose is the signature in the left-hand corner."

"Oh, 'Max Brendel,' of course. Anybody can write his own name."

"No,' said Max, "it is not 'Max Brendel;' though I forged it, I own. Look and see."

He looked, and read—

"*Pinxit Adolf Meyer.*"

Meyer stared round in bewilderment—such was his hate for Max that he was half incredulous of his own name.

"I have called you sorcerer!" he exclaimed, at length. "You, who could bring a face down from another world to conquer me, can, to save yourself from justice, find nothing hard in transforming your miserable name to mine. But there are laws against witchcraft, Herr Brendel—and to these I appeal."

"Bah! you are madder than I thought, Herr Meyer," said the Burgomaster. "Witchcraft in painting a portrait, and an excellent one, of the Baroness at Regenstein, and so beating a picture you never allowed us to see! Witchcraft in forcing that same picture of yours into an honour that he might have made his own! If it is any comfort to you, my friend, we all read '*Pinxit Adolf Meyer*' long before you. Witchcraft!—pooh! You are an ungrateful rascal, unless you are madder than a March hare. I suppose I must admire your picture —as the Herr Professor thinks it good—but I don't admire you. I am sorry the Herr Professor liked it: very sorry indeed."

Max held out his hand—but Meyer rejected it scornfully.

"I always knew the Herr Professor was an excellent critic," he said, with a sneer. "I am glad he turns out an honest one—in your opinion, Herr Burgomaster, whose honest simplicity is above suspicion. For me, however it has happened, my day has come—genius protects her own. To-night I carry this picture, my picture, to Munich; and I shake from my shoes the dust of Brendels and Burgomasters—of knaves and dupes of knaves."

The Burgomaster shrugged his shoulders and let him go.

But, if everybody was disgusted with Meyer, nobody was pleased with Max Brendel. The favourite lion had too meekly stepped from his throne. Some thought him Quixotic; some, lazy; some, theatrical and affected—sacrificing something he did not care for in order to make capital out of a stage scene. Nobody could guess what he had really given up—what a battle passion and conscience had waged.

"Our former friend the Herr Professor must be a fool," said Rothkopf.

"Or an incapable," suggested Sleinitz. "And if so, he has proved himself a clever man."

"There are fools who are very clever fellows, Sleinitz."

"Like Adolf Meyer, for example?"

"Adolf Meyer? bah! Any fool can be clever enough to become famous by jumping into the water. *Donnerwetter*, though—I mustn't let him see whose hat I wear. He will be claiming his laurel crown!"

XVIII.

A strange calm filled the heart of Max Brendel. His sudden inspiration to do what was right at any cost seemed to shatter his false self at once into a million atoms, as completely as Elsa had shattered the looking-glass of Herr Elias. He thought of Elsa once more, like one who has been suddenly set free from a nightmare. Having, by a final wrench, saved himself from what would have prevented his looking straight into the eyes even of the Baroness again, he felt stung to think how he had cut himself off from the power of looking into those of Elsa. This was not inconsistency—it was simply the inevitable reaction from mental and moral drunkenness that must, at last, have come. He was bound to the Baroness, if she would still accept him in spite of his failure to fulfil her condition; but he longed for the possibility of making his peace with Elsa, to bid her adieu, and to tell her frankly how justly she had judged him even before he had been intentionally false to her.

It was strange, he began to reflect, that they

had never met, even by accident, and in the narrow streets of their little town, since the mirrored image of the Baroness had seemed to take tangible form. In truth, she had carefully avoided every chance of meeting him, just as he had unconsciously taken every precaution not to meet her. Even now, if he should come across her by accident, it was more likely than not that his courage would fail him, and that he would let her go by without the longed-for word.

It was therefore well, or ill, for him that his reflections prevented his seeing her before they met face to face in the *Adler Gasse*, through which he was passing on his way from the *Rath-haus*. Of course he met her—to think more suddenly and acutely than usual of one whom we have not seen for long, is in the nature of a presentiment that seldom fails.

He started—she just trembled enough to give him one touch of courage. He stopped, and said—

"Elsa!"

She ought to have closed her ears and passed on, without pausing an instant. She did close her ears, and did attempt to pass on, but not without the instant's pause. That gave him time for one word more.

"Elsa," he said, in a low voice and humbly, "I am not going to trouble you. You have nothing more to do with a worthless fellow like me. I

only want to say—to tell you I have behaved to you like—like—what Meyer called me—a liar, a traitor, a scoundrel; and to ask you—never to forgive me."

"I have forgiven you," she said. "There was nothing to forgive. You left off loving me—that's all. You couldn't help that, I suppose."

"Don't speak to me like that, for heaven's sake! You are heaping me with coals of fire. I don't know myself—it's not true that I left off loving you—I——"

"Max!"

"No—I know you can't believe a word I say—I don't ask you. I don't believe myself—I don't know if I have been mad or a blackguard. Something has been driving me on—not that that's any excuse: I have been under a spell—I am under one now. I only know that you are the best girl in the whole world: that even if I were bound heart and soul to another, I should put you first—always. Though I have done all I could think of to break your heart, I would cut myself in pieces, if that would make you happy. Be happy, Elsa—forget the miserable Max of to-day for the sake of the Max whom you thought you knew long ago. No—never forgive me, Elsa—but forget me as you would try to forget one whom you despise."

"I forgive you, Max. I always said, even in my happy time, how could I ever be very much to you?

I was always fearing that the end would come, and it did come. Such ends always do."

"God bless you, Elsa! Only tell me you are not unhappy, and then——"

He had followed her to the door of Herr Elias. She entered, and he still followed, so as not to lose her last word. Herr Elias did not seem to be at home, and they were alone.

"Good-bye, Max," she said, "and God bless you always! Stay—I hear there is one whom you really love, and who is worthy to be the wife of a great man. Oh Max, be sure you love her! If she is a fine lady, as they say, she will not be so strong to bear things as me."

"One whom I really love?" he asked dreamily, passing his hand over his brow. "One whom I really love? In heaven's name, Elsa, am I awake or sleeping? One who has sent me mad, I believe. If I believed in witchcraft, like Meyer, I should say One who has bewitched me with grey eyes and golden hair. I *must* believe in witchcraft, Elsa: I was all yours—all thine, till I called upon Satan himself to aid me to gain thee—and she came."

"There are no witches, Max—the Herr Pastor says that, so it must be true. Has she done you harm?"

"None—none. She is a good woman, Elsa: a great mind and a noble soul. But yet, from the moment I saw her, I was changed."

"You loved her, Max—it was love that made the change. It was her love, not mine, that made thee rich and great, and taught thee how I was not tall enough to reach to thy heart half-way. Max—does she love thee, even a little? will she be good to thee?"

"She would have been my wife, Elsa, if—if—I had been able to give her glory. That is over now. I have given up glory for truth's sake, and——"

She did not ask him how, but her eyes brightened.

"For truth's sake? Oh, then, never fear! If she would have been thy wife for glory's sake, now she will be thy wife ten times more."

"*Thou* sayest this, Elsa? *Thou* art content to see me——"

"The husband of one thou lovest? Of one who loves thee? More than content, Max—more than —oh Max! if only I——"

"Elsa, Elsa! thou lovest me still—and I love thee: listen to me, for heaven's sake, Elsa! I have been mad, base, if you please—witchcraft or no witchcraft, I have been under a wild, drunken, delirious spell. I dare not tell thee what I was about to do! My hand was about to rob death of its laurels—ask me not yet to speak of the sin I had in thought already done—when my ear caught the sound of the cathedral bell as it chimed a quarter to ten."

"Ah! the very moment that I let the mirror fall!"

"I counted every stroke, as if I were concerned with the slightest sight or sound, when suddenly—how can I tell what happened?—I started as one starts from sleep, and asked myself—'Who art thou?' And I answered—'While Elsa lives, I am Max Brendel: Elsa's Max, while I have a soul to be saved: and I am about to commit a sin that will divide my soul from hers.'"

"And then?"

"How canst thou ask, Elsa? The sin remained undone."

She grew pale, but held out her hand.

"Then, if the thought of Elsa saved thee from sin—oh Max, I must say it—let the thought of something far better than Elsa save thee once more. I can live without my true Max; but I cannot live unless he is true. If thou art pledged to one who loves thee, thou art all hers; and to me, thou art not my true Max unless thou art true to her."

"Elsa! but if I loved—if I love her no more?"

"Thou must learn to love her. If she has given thee all things, even herself, if thou art pledged to her, she only can release thee."

"And if——"

"Ah, she will not release thee."

"But thou——"

"I did not release thee. I wear thy old ring still. But I release thee now."

"But if——"

"There is no if, Max. If thou art false to thy betrothed, thou art now false to me as well as to her. I know not what thou spakest about the sin of robbing death, but well I know what robbing life means—robbing it of trust and hope and love: thou canst do nothing now for me, Max; but thou canst keep thyself from sin to her."

"Eh, eh, my good Herr Max! Goes all well at Regenstein? Eh, eh, eh? And the good Fräulein, too—Hm!"

"I will see thee once more, Elsa," whispered Max, hurriedly; "and then, what must be, must be." He touched her hand, barely nodded to Herr Elias, and strode away.

"And what want you with me, my good Fräulein Elsa?" asked Herr Elias.

"What is the price of these ear-rings?" she asked, holding out her one piece of finery.

"That depends, my good Fräulein. To buy or to sell?"

"What would you give for them?"

"To you? oh, ah, eh—twice their value, my good Fräulein Elsa."

"Then six gulden, please, Herr Elias. You sold them for three."

"You are sharp, my good Fräulein Elsa. But the wear and the tear——"

"I have not worn them since they were new.

Take them please, Herr Elias, and keep the gulden too."

"Eh, eh! A present from a pretty girl?"

"I have two left hands, Herr Elias—and this morning I let your mirror fall—and father says the glass—it broke—would cost——"

"Eh, eh, eh, eh, what!" exclaimed the old broker, taking the ear-rings—by which, in spite of his bargain, he probably managed not to lose in the long-run—"Eh, eh, eh, eh, eh!"

But what he meant, or if indeed he meant anything, by this continuous exclamation, he did not explain.

XIX.

Max, after leaving the old shop in the *Adler Gasse*, went slowly along the road that led to Regenstein. He knew what he feared, but what he hoped he hardly knew. Would the Baroness hold him to his word? If she forgave him his loss of fame, then not only Elsa, not only his newly-regained honour, but the simplest and commonest gratitude bound him to his first friend, his unwearied benefactress, his muse, his inspiring soul, his all but affianced wife, with chains no less if not more powerful than those had been which no longer bound him to Elsa. If she released him, then indeed—but that must not even be dreamed.

He knew she loved him, and he now felt that love like hers would surely set at naught tests and conditions as soon as they had failed.

In this mood, nerving himself against hope, he reached Regenstein. He rang as usual at the bell—twice, three times, four times—but no one answered. At last, however, the great gate was solemnly swung back by the old porter, who, instead of welcoming him with his usual ready bow, stared mutely and stolidly as though his wits were gone. In the courtyard all was silence.

"What means all this?" asked Max. "What has happened?"

The porter made an effort to speak, but failed. For all answer, like a man who moves mechanically without knowing what he was doing, he felt in his pocket and handed Max a letter unsealed.

"For you, Herr Professor," he managed to bring out at last, "when you arrived. Found, Herr Professor—from mademoiselle her gracious ladyship's lady's-maid—for you—my gracious lady——"

Max took the paper and read hastily.

"My own Max," it began, "I cannot rest till I have told thee how I wounded my own heart when I wounded thine. Forgive one who has begun to love so late that she hardly knows what love means—who while the shadow of that hateful man from Munich was on her doubted what she felt for thee. I know all now—great or humble, I am

thine always"—his heart grew heavier still: "when I saw thy Prophetess I was glad; but I would rather a thousand times that thou hadst failed, and hadst found thyself unable to think of any face but mine. Thou wilt come soon—but I cannot let thee wait to know that I take thee now, not because thou art great, but because I love thee—that——"

"What means this?" asked Max. "It is unfinished—why is it given to me unclosed?"

"Herr Professor, my gracious lady the Baroness passed away this morning at exactly a quarter before ten."

"Passed away? Where? How passed away?"

"Dead, Herr Professor."

XX.

The heart of Max Brendel, though it had ceased to beat for the woman who represented to him the empress-fancy of his soul, did not, in one single moment, throw off its burden. It was with the sorrow we all feel for those whom we shall never behold again that he looked upon the corpse of the Glass Queen. She had gone away for ever into the unknown land whence she had come: she had died out of the artist's life—his one dream of Genius was dead, which had led him into many

joys and many sins, and there remained to him henceforth only the homely love of the mortal woman for the mortal man.

. . . . . .

"And so ended," said Max Brendel when he first told Elsa the whole story, without gloss or reserve —"and so ended the dream of a charlatan."

She believed every word—looking-glass and all. Had she not broken it with her own hands at the very hour when Max repented and the Baroness died?

"And art thou happy—here in this quiet place, teaching and toiling? Dost thou never envy Adolf Meyer, in all his glory, and think how things might have been? Art thou quite happy, with only thy work and me?"

"*Only* with thee, Elsa? Only with all the universe!" said Max Brendel. "A short cut to glory, indeed! Thou mayst not believe in witchcraft, but that is the devil's road, all the same. I have more than all the glory *I* deserve. All comes at last to him who has courage, and hope, and truth, and——"

"—Patience!" said left-handed Elsa.

THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE AT LISBON.

[Part of a letter written by Mr Chase to his sister, giving her an account of the Great Earthquake which happened at Lisbon in the year 1755.]

ABOUT three-quarters after nine o'clock in the morning, on Saturday the 1st of November 1755, I was alone in my bed-chamber, four stories from the ground, opening a bureau, when a shaking or trembling of the earth (which I knew immediately to be an earthquake), gentle at first, but gradually becoming violent, much alarmed me. Turning round to look at the window, the glass seemed to be falling out. Surprised at the continuation of the motion, and calling to mind the miserable fate of Callao, in the Spanish West Indies, I dreaded a like catastrophe; and remembering that our house was so old and weak that any heavy carriage passing made it shake throughout, I ran directly into the *arada*, to see if the neighbouring houses were agitated with the same violence. This place was a single room at the top of the

house, with windows all round the roof, supported by stone pillars. It was only one storey higher than my chamber, but commanded a prospect of some part of the river, and of all the lower part of the city, from the King's Palace up to the Castle. I was no sooner up the stairs than the most horrid prospect that imagination can figure appeared before my eyes! The house began to heave to that degree that, to prevent being thrown down, I was obliged to put my arm out of a window and support myself by the wall—every stone in the wall separating and grinding against each other (as did the walls of the other houses, with variety of different motions), causing the most dreadful jumbling noise ears ever heard. The adjoining wall of Mr Goddard's room fell first; then followed all the upper part of his house, and of every other as far as I could see towards the Castle,—when, turning my eyes quick to the front of the room (for I thought the whole city was sinking into the earth), I saw the tops of two of the pillars meet, and saw no more. I had resolved to throw myself upon the floor, but suppose I did not; for I immediately felt myself falling, and then, after I know not how long, just as if waking from a dream, with confused ideas, I found my mouth stuffed full of something that with my left hand I strove to get out; and not being able to breathe freely, struggled till my head was quite disengaged from

the rubbish. In doing this I came to myself, and, recollecting what had happened, supposed the earthquake to be over; and from what I had so lately seen, expected to find the whole city fallen to the ground, and myself at the top of the ruins. When attempting to look about me, I saw four high walls near fifty feet above me (the place where I lay was about ten feet in length and scarcely two feet wide), without either door or window in any of them. Astonished to the last degree at my situation, I remembered that there was such a place between the houses; and, having seen the upper parts of both fall, concluded that either the inhabitants must be all destroyed, or at least that there was no probability of their looking down there again time enough for my preservation; so that, struck with horror at the shocking thought of being starved to death, immured in that manner, I remained stupefied, till the still falling tiles and rubbish made me seek for shelter under a small arch in the narrow wall opposite my head as I lay, at the bottom of which there appeared to be a little hole quite through it. Upon approaching the aperture, with difficulty dragging myself out of the rubbish, I found it much larger than I had imagined; and, first getting in my head and arm, by degrees I pulled all my body after, and fell about two feet into a small dark place, arched over at the top, which

I supposed to be only a support for the two walls; till, feeling about, I found on one side a narrow passage, that led me round a place like an oven, into a little room, where stood a Portuguese man covered with dust, who, the moment he saw me coming in that way, starting back and crossing himself all over, cried out, as their custom is when much surprised, "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! who are you? where do you come from?"—of which being informed, he placed me in a chair. This done, clasping his hands together, he lifted them and his eyes towards the ceiling, in show of the utmost distress and concern. This made me examine myself, which before I had not leisure to do. My right arm hung down before me motionless, like a dead weight, the shoulder being out and the bone broken; my stockings were cut to pieces, and my legs covered with wounds; the right ankle was swelled to a prodigious size, with a fountain of blood spouting upwards from it; the knee also was much bruised, and my left side felt as if beat in, so that I could scarcely breathe; all the left side of my face likewise swelled up—the skin was beat off, and the blood streaming from it; with a great wound above, and a small one below the eye, and several bruises on my back and head. Barely had I perceived myself to be in this mangled condition, when another shock, threatening as the first, came on.

The Portuguese flew directly out of the door. The violence of the shock, and the falling of the houses, with the screams of the people, made me again seek shelter below the arch I had entered in at; where waiting till it had abated, I returned back again, and, nobody appearing, went out at the same door I had seen the man do, in hopes to find him again or meet with some other person; but instead of a room, as I expected, it was only a narrow staircase, which with a few steps brought me, to my surprise, into the street, not imagining myself to have been so near it. The people were all at prayers, covered with dust, and the light appeared as of a dark cloudy day; when, flattering myself that my legs might still support me to the water-side, I turned and saw the street below (which was very narrow) filled with fallen houses as high as the tops of the remaining ones. I then, in hopes to get into the country, advanced a few steps up the hill, but the same sad prospect appeared above! and in a street to the right I saw no other. I knew not what to do, my strength failed, and I fell prostrate just where the three streets met. I then thought myself so much past all assistance, that though Mr Branfill, Mr Goddard, and their people came to the very spot where I lay, I spoke not to any of them, although they stood close by me, till Mr John Ernest Jorg, a German, and merchant of the city of Hamburg,

coming to his door, told them he saw no way for their escaping out of the city; therefore begged they would go up into a garden he had by the top of his house, which was the safest place he knew of. This they complied with, and how long afterwards I lay there I know not; but, recovering a little strength, I raised myself up, and set my back against the wall of this gentleman's house, who appearing again at his door, I heard him say, "What miserable wretch is this? He seems by his dress to be a stranger,"—and coming down from his door round to the other side of my face, he cried out, "Dear Mr Chase, what a shocking sight is this! Let me carry you up-stairs, and try what we can do for you." My answer was, "Many thanks, but it is now too late." "Never think so," said he; "I hope the worst is past, and you shall have the very first assistance that can be procured:" then calling some of his people, he had me conveyed up-stairs, and put me in a chair till he had got me something to drink; and a bed being made ready, he laid me there, desiring me to compose myself as much as possible.

But he had not left me long, before another shock made me lay my left arm over my eyes, expecting soon to be released from further misery, till all the plaster falling from the walls covered the bed, causing such a dust that I was roused to exert all my strength to open the door just at the bed's

head, and get out. The noise I made soon brought Mr Jorg out of his garden, when, begging of him to lay me there with the other people, to abide the common chance, he said there was a room on one side of it, and he would order a bed to be made ready immediately. He placed me there accordingly, telling me he had already sent for the English surgeon, Mr Scrafton; but his house was down, and there was no knowing what had become of him. Mr Jorg and Mrs Goddard came constantly between the shocks (now much less violent and frequent), to offer me their assistance; and, during one of the intervals, Mr Jorg and his uncle dressed my leg with some plasters that they happened to have in the house.

Mr Jorg's uncle would not go into the garden during the shocks, but remained in the house, declaring he had lived a long time, and if it so pleased Providence, he was as ready to die in that manner as in any other. Mrs Goddard also acquainted me with the deaths of several already known (whose fate I then thought much happier than my own), and that three fires had broken out in the city, which did not then alarm me much. One of the fires and a large part of the city I could see from the bed as I lay, for I was now again at the top of a high house, some part of which had fallen, and the remainder was much shattered.

About two o'clock, the earth having enjoyed some

little respite, the cloud of dust was dissipated; and the sun appearing, we began to hope the worst was over; as indeed it was with regard to earthquakes, but still every succeeding shock, though it did little harm, was attended with the same dread and terror as the foregoing ones. However, this made the people in the garden (consisting of English, Irish, Dutch, and Portuguese) recover spirits enough to think of attempting to get out of the ruinous city; when Mr Jorg, wholly intent on assisting everybody, desired them only just to stay to eat some fish he had ordered to be got ready, and they would then be the better enabled to bear any future fatigue. To oblige his great care I ate a little, without any inclination; imagining, from the painful condition I was in, a very few hours more would release me from further suffering; nor did anybody hitherto flatter me with other hopes. This was one reason, as well as knowing that all people were so intent upon their own preservation as not to be at leisure to assist others, that I suffered Mr Jorg's garden by degrees to grow quite empty—and Mr Branfill, Mr Goddard, and their people, after dining and taking leave of me, to go away without asking their assistance, or even desiring them to send any help to me, till finding Mr Jorg was left with only his old uncle, an old lame lady of his acquaintance, whom he had sent his servants to fetch from her house (where she was left alone,

and very probably would have perished had he not thought of her), and two or three of his people; and supposing he intended to quit his house, I begged of him to endeavour to hire some people to carry me out of town. He said he feared it would be impossible—that all his servants but one had left him, and the city was quite deserted; that if it was my request, he would try, but, for his own part, he was determined to take the fate of his house, as he thought venturing out of it would be only to encounter greater danger; and in my condition he would advise me to do the same. This assurance quite satisfied me, little imagining how much more distress I had still to support.

All that afternoon I passed in most melancholy reflections, whilst the flames spread everywhere within my view with inexpressible swiftness, till about five o'clock they seemed approaching close to the window of the room where I lay. Mr Jorg then came in, and looking at me without speaking, which hitherto he had always done, retired, shutting the door close after him. Full of suspicions, from what he had before said, that there was no assistance to be had, I was struck by the stillness in the adjacent room, and with difficulty raising myself up, listened a considerable time without hearing anything stir, when I concluded that he had found himself obliged to leave his house, and, lacking courage to tell me the horrid fate I must

submit to, he had quitted it without speaking at all.

In the utmost agony of body and mind I determined to ascertain if this were the case, and if so, to endeavour if possible to reach the gallery on the east side of the window, and by throwing myself down the hill, put an end to all my excessive miseries at once. By the help of two chairs I just got within reach of the door with the greatest pain, and was then so spent I was obliged to sit down, nor could I have gone a step farther had the room been on fire. Recovering a little strength, I opened the door, and found Mr Jorg, the old lady, and two other persons, all silently sitting round the outer room. Surprised to see me got so far, he asked me the reason of it; to which I replied, that as I was fully sensible both of the great distress we were reduced to, and of his inability to assist me, I begged (with tears in my eyes) as the greatest favour, that before he found himself obliged to quit his house, he would either throw me over the gallery, or in any other way despatch me, and not leave me in agony, lingering a few hours, to die a dreadful death! He desired me not to talk in that manner, and assured me most affectionately he never had intended to leave me, and if no other help came, he would himself carry me upon his back, and we should take our chance together,—that the fire had not yet surrounded us, and that

there was still a passage free to the Terrio do Paco (a large square before the King's Palace), and as soon as necessity obliged us, he hoped we might all get there very safe; therefore I had much better lie down again, and he would be careful to acquaint me in time. But as I still suspected that only his good-nature made him promise this, I desired to stay with them, which he permitted me; going up himself every half-hour to the top of his house, to observe what progress the fire made; till about eleven o'clock, when there came two servants of a German gentleman, who I think was his nephew, at that time also in the house. Mr Jorg then declared he thought it time to remove; and with great composure going for his hat and cloak, returned with a cap and quilt for me, telling me perhaps I might find it cold when I was carried out; and then desired the German gentleman and his servants to carry me to the square first, and return again to fetch the lame lady. They carried me in one of the room chairs, with the quilt over me (which proved afterwards of great service), and another person went before with a torch. I heard some poor wretches begging for help as I was carried through a narrow alley down a steep hill, which was the only passage left free from ruins.

Opposite to the bottom of the alley was a church belonging to a convent of friars, the door of which

was open. There stood lighted candles upon the high altar, the friars seemed very busy in their church dresses, and in the porch lay some dead bodies. Thence through a narrow street to the Church of St Mary Magdalene. I saw no houses fallen down into that street, but everywhere great stones scattered about; and as I passed, looking up a street, could see over the ruins the upper windows of our houses still standing. The Church of St Mary Magdalene had not fallen; its doors were open, and some lights and people in it. I observed the fire had already taken possession of the street leading to the Cathedral. In the Silversmiths' Street there were no houses quite fallen, and some few people seemed to be employed in throwing bundles out of the windows.

As I passed the end of the Rua Nova I saw both sides of it were on fire, as well as the next street, which runs parallel with it. At the square I found the King's Palace (which made one side of it) and half of the adjoining side on fire, burning slowly, the little wind driving it gently onwards. In the opposite part Mrs Adford met me, and told me her sister Mrs Graves and her family were there, sitting on some bundles of clothes they had saved; but as it was in the open air, my conductors chose rather to place me in a stall, with some others in my condition.

To find myself thus, so much beyond all expecta-

tion, suddenly relieved from the constant apprehension of falling houses, and dangers of the fire (as I thought, at least), when I was in the greatest despair, and had given up all hopes of assistance, raised my spirits to that degree, that now for the first time, notwithstanding the great pain I was in, I began to hope it was possible still to live, till new terrors employed my thoughts. For the people, all full of the notion that it was the day of judgment, and willing therefore to be employed in good works, had loaded themselves with crucifixes and saints; and men and women equally the same, during the intervals between the shocks, were either singing litanies or cruelly tormenting the dying with religious ceremonies; and whenever the earth trembled, all on their knees roaring out *Misericordia!* in the most dismal voice imaginable. The fear, then, that my presence might excite their fanaticism at such a time when all government was at an end (and it was impossible to guess what turn their furious zeal might take against that worst of criminals, a heretic), made me dread the approach of every person. Add to this, that the Caista Pedra (or stony quay), adjoining to this square, had already sunk, and the least rising of the water would overflow us all. In such reflections there passed about two hours, during which time Mr Jorg and his family were come to the square to Mr Graves's family. The fire was now

almost opposite, and under the shed, which had at first been quite crowded, there was nobody left but myself; when I heard a cry of "Beat down the *cabaras*" (stalls), some of which, it seems, had taken fire; and, telling all that were under them to get out, they began immediately to knock down that where I lay. With the greatest difficulty I got myself out before it tumbled down; and, meeting with Mr Jorg and another person, they carried me to Mr Graves's family, and laid me on their bundles.

Mrs Graves I found to be of the common opinion that it was the last day; and, attempting to persuade her to the contrary, she told me it was but of little consequence to us, as the fire was just approaching to the gunpowder-shops opposite, and she expected they would blow up every moment. This new terror stopped my further speaking, and we silently waited the event, which proved, however, most favourable; for there were only three explosions, one after the other, making a great report, but not attended with mischief. About this time a poor Irish beggarwoman, who seemed to be half-mad, putting her trust in some saint with a strange name, went through the fire in the Rua Nova to Mr Houston's cellar, and brought from thence a bottle of wine to Mr Graves, from whom she would receive no gratuity at such a time as that. Of this Mrs Adford gave me some.

On Sunday morning, about five o'clock, the wind

changing, it blew very fresh, and drove the fire with the utmost rapidity down the hill from the Cathedral to our side of the square, which obliged us immediately to move; and their blacks, carrying me opposite to the Custom House, left me there till they had conveyed their master's bundles to the other side. But so quick was the progress of the flames, that they presently seized upon the Custom-House, bursting out all at once with a violent heat. I attempted to get away, but was unable; so remained scorching there till Mr Jorg removed me; and the blacks came and conveyed me again to Mrs Graves's family, laying me, as before, on their bundles. We were now very near the Palace, the roof of which had already tumbled in, and the fires were so much decreased that there seemed to be but little left to burn, and we apprehended no danger except from the falling of the walls, almost all of which were still standing.

About nine o'clock, the sun shining very bright, some boats came to the shore, and carried off a number of persons. A young man, son to our housekeeper, finding me out, told me he was endeavouring to hire a boat to carry his mother (also much hurt, and then in the square) on board ship, and asked me to go with them. To this I hardly answered in the affirmative, supposing all the danger from the fire to be over, and therefore unwilling to leave my only friend, Mr Jorg, behind me.

We were now again in a crowd of people with their bundles, all endeavouring to procure boats. Amongst them I saw Mr George Barclay lying on a mattress, who had (as I learned afterwards) one of his feet smashed by a stone; but I saw no more either of him or the housekeeper's son. Mr Jorg, returning from the water-side, desired us all to remove thither, or else it would be impossible to procure a boat, for the moment they reached the shore they were filled with people. This was directly complied with, and I found the cool air from the water very refreshing; but it did not long continue so; for in a little time it grew excessively hot, and we soon perceived that the fire, which we imagined we had left so far behind us, had crept along through the low buildings by the water-side, and was just breaking out in a pent-house close by us. This obliged our immediate return into the square; soon after which the fire, by means of a large quantity of timber which lay upon the shore, gained the end of the Palace next to the water, and there, to our great surprise, blazed out fresh again, though it had seemed before to be almost extinguished; and presently we found ourselves every way surrounded by a prodigious fire, attended with such a shower of ashes from the timber by the water-side, that, to keep them off, I was forced (notwithstanding the violent heat) to close my quilt quite over my face. About this time, two chaise *machos* (or mules), with

all their furniture on, were running about loose. The harness of one of them caught fire, and, blazing all over its back, made the mule gallop with the greatest violence backwards and forwards over the people, the other following; whilst I, unable to get out of their way, lay listening to the screams of the people to guess the distance they might be from me, till I heard somebody cry out, "You are on fire!" and feeling my quilt snatched away, saw it thrown on the ground, where, the fire being stamped out with their feet, the quilt was returned to me again. I then told Mrs Graves if she did not remove we should be on fire again; that it was better to go into the corner of the square (where the entrance to the Palace had been), the only place free from bundles, and whither the wind did not blow the flames, and run the risk of the falling of the walls, than to remain there for the certainty of the fire; but Mrs Graves, whose spirits were quite exhausted, replied that it was impossible to go anywhere to avoid it; that having already removed several times to no purpose, she would stir no farther.

Mr Jorg, however, told me that, if I desired it, he would carry me there, and accordingly did so with the help of the blacks, and placing me upon a small bundle of a Portuguese, they returned. Soon after I heard several Portuguese men and women encouraging each other to attempt an escape

through the ruins of the Palace, and soon, mounting over the rubbish, they disappeared. Just then part of an arch, through which they were supposed to pass, fell in, causing a kind of compassionate cry amongst the people; but as none of them returned, I conclude they were successful. About an hour after, the fire still gaining ground, I attracted the attention of a Portuguese woman, who began her prayers in a melancholy tone, holding a crucifix over my head, and the people on their knees, forming a circle round us, joined with her.

As this was what I had all along much feared would happen, I waited the event with the utmost horror, and had determined to feign insensibility, when she abruptly stopped, and immediately the dismal roar of *Misericordia!* always attendant on the earthquakes (of which there had been several uncounted by me, as the fire had become the more threatening danger), made me expect another shock; but perceiving no motion, I was surprised, and venturing to open my quilt, I saw all kneeling down, and that the great square was full of flames; for the people from the adjoining streets had filled it with bundles, which they had left there when the increase of the fire had driven themselves away. These bundles were now all in a blaze, except just in our corner, and under the Palace walls, whither Mr Graves's family had retired; but as the wind blew very fresh, and drove the flames in sheets of

fire close slanting over our heads, expecting them every minute to seize upon us, I lost all my spirits, and, again abandoning myself to despair, thought it was still impossible, after so many escapes, to avoid the sort of death I most dreaded.

After some time passed in these dreadful apprehensions, the wind suddenly abated, and the fire, burning upwards, made no farther progress. This again restored hope to us, and hunger obliged those that had provisions to think of eating, when an Irish Roman Catholic gentlewoman sitting near me asked if my name was not Chase, and said she knew my father many years, and gave me a large piece of water-melon and some bread and water. Mr Jorg also soon after brought me some bread, and, carrying me on his back to Mr Graves's family, left me there; and presently after, going himself with his uncle and the old lady to the water-side (to which there was now a passage, the pent-houses being burned down), and not returning soon, I began to imagine they were gone, till it was confirmed to me by Mr Waubbes (who was the gentleman that assisted in bringing me to the square), saying that "he was surprised Mr Jorg had left me at last." But, for my own part, I had more reason to be surprised he had not done it before, and to think myself very happy that, after saving my life so many times, he had not deserted me till the most threatening dangers were almost

over. Therefore, far from making any complaints, I only wished him the utmost happiness, excited thereto by the warmest gratitude for my preservation. However, as he had been almost the only person that had showed me any attention, I could not but be very uneasy at my present situation; and, determining to exert myself as much as possible, now I had nobody left to depend upon for assistance, I applied immediately to Mr Graves to beg a place in the boat he was endeavouring to procure for his family; to which he replied, "that his own family was sufficient to fill any boat he was likely to get; that it was no time for ceremony; therefore he could not pretend to offer any such thing." Surprised at such an answer, especially as the boats on that river are so large, I asked if his black servants were reckoned part of his family, or, if not, whether he would permit me to employ one of them to try to hire a boat for me? To which Mr Waubbes (to whom one of the blacks, it seemed, belonged) directly answered I was welcome to his servant to go wherever I pleased. Mr Graves also said I might if I liked it, but that it was impossible to get a boat, even if I was to offer a hundred *mocdas* for one. Knowing that I could not be in a worse situation, I accepted their offers directly, and desired one of the blacks to go immediately to the water-side, to wait there, and to endeavour to procure me a place in a boat, telling

him I would give him a thirty-six-shilling piece to get me conveyed up the river to the convent of Madre de Dios, and to carry me thence to Mr Hake's house, just by it, upon his back;—to make the best bargain he could, and the remainder to be for himself. After which, if I remember well, Mr Graves, having removed us more into the square, nearer to the water-side, placed his own family in a great glass coach which stood at a little distance, leaving only the maid-servant with her bundles, upon which I was laid. There came to her then a poor boy, who seemed to have a crust over his face, begging earnestly for some water. There being but little left, he was refused. He laid himself down, and, shrieking in the most dreadful agonies, prevailed with her to give him all that there was. Soon after, seeing the two women who had given me the melon going with a man towards the water-side, I desired Mr Graves's maid to apply to them, to ask them if they had any room in their boat, but she was answered in the negative. I begged of her also to call to the watermen, who began now to appear. At last one of them came. I offered him half a *moidore*, which he refused, saying they were sent only for the servants of the Palace—however, that he would go and consult with his companions upon it. About three o'clock, as I suppose, we began to hear a dreadful rumbling noise underground. It seemed to proceed from

under the ruins of the Palace—as if the earth had opened there, and the river was rushing in, forcing great stones along with it. The cause of it I could not tell, but it continued till my departure.

Mr Houston, a coffee-house-man, with whom I had not the least acquaintance, seeing the miserable condition I lay in, came and offered me any assistance in his power. I asked him directly if he was attempting to quit the square before night?—to which he answered he was not; because he wanted to carry away with him some pieces of holland he had saved, and for which he supposed he should hardly be able to procure a conveyance before the next day. I desired him to bring them and sit down by me, which he complied with, to my very great satisfaction; for I almost despaired of receiving any further assistance from Mr Graves's family; and as the night was coming on, I knew not what would become of me without some friendly help. Some time afterwards, when I had given up all hopes of their return, came the two watermen, and offered to carry me, provided they were paid beforehand.

Mr Houston said it was too much, which would have been of little consideration to me at such a time, had not the black boy returned also to tell me he had agreed for a place for eighteen shillings, and that I must go directly. With the greatest joy imaginable, I desired him to take me on his

back; nor do I know why I did not ask Mr Houston to go with me, or why he did not himself offer it. I took my leave of him and of Mr Graves's family, who were all just returned from the glass coach, and were in tears disputing amongst themselves — (the cause I did not then know). Mr Jorg's partner, Mr Brockleman, was with them, who came ashore in a ship's boat on purpose to carry them away; but as I learnt afterwards, they would not accept his offer, because his boat was not large enough to carry all of them and their bundles together at once; therefore chose rather to remain in the square another night than divide.

We were once more put to great distress by the fire; and Mr Houston in the confusion endeavouring to save their bundles, lost his own pieces of holland. However, the next day they all got away safe.

But to return to myself: another black boy offered to attend me. I made no objection, and between the two was conveyed into a large boat almost full of people, and there laid upon a board along the middle of it. A priest that came in afterwards treading upon my lame leg, the increase of pain almost overcame me; however, the coolness of the water, which was very smooth and pleasant, and the evening fine, soon brought me to myself. Going a little way up the river, just beyond the

fire, the boat stopped at the Ribeira, or fish-market —a large place, from which there was an open way along the river-side into the country. The people were all put on shore; and to my great surprise, they were going to put me there likewise. Vexed to the last degree at my disappointment, I exerted all the spirits I had left, and told them that they might see in my condition it was to no purpose to set me on shore there: if they would not comply with their agreement, I desired to be carried back to the place whence they had brought me, where the fire had almost spent itself, rather than be placed here to meet with it again. One of them said he knew nothing of any such agreement— that his partner was wrong to make it, for they belonged to a town on the other side of the river, and could not have time sufficient. I desired them to carry me as far as they could, and they accordingly proceeded forward. I saw Mr Home going on shore in a ship's boat, but did not speak to him.

When we came to the Horse-Guards, at the end of the city, the watermen said the tide was turning —and, muttering together, I heard them call me a heretic, and the blacks devils; so that I was glad to be rid of them at any rate, and was but roughly put on shore; where, deeming it unsafe they should know I had more money about me than the thirty-six-shilling piece, I chose rather to send the blacks with one of the boatmen to get the change, and

remained myself lying on the ground close to the water; during which a Galician porter came and offered to carry me anywhere I pleased for eighteen shillings; but as the night was coming on, I had not confidence sufficient to trust him. Upon their return, which seemed to me a long time at first, the boatman asked me whether I did not think he had run away with my money?—then said it was not good, and talked in an odd kind of manner, to which I made no reply. The black boys also showed no inclination to go any farther, saying they could not get back to their masters in the night unless the watermen would wait, as by their agreement at first they had promised to do. This the watermen said they would still comply with, if they made haste back again; upon which they set out, carrying me by turns on their shoulders, often setting me down to rest themselves; for they were so weakly that I expected them every step to tumble. The distance, I think, cannot be above a mile, but it seemed to us then a long way indeed; and it was with great difficulty I prevailed with them to get on as far as Mr Hake's *juinte* or country house. The road was pretty full of people going silently along with the most dejected countenances. At one of their resting-places, the blacks put me upon some stone steps leading up to a nobleman's house, which brought the ladies to the window. Imagining I was coming to them, they told me

that part of the large house of retirement for widows had just tumbled down. At last they brought me, almost overcome with the increase of pain, to the first gate of Mr Hake's garden, which standing open, we went in, and found the walk leading to the house full of people; but as it was growing dark, I could not distinguish them.

I asked, however, immediately, if Mr Hake was living, and if he were there? neither of which they knew. Proceeding on a little farther, I heard a man speaking English, and, repeating the same questions to him, was only answered that he had lost his wife and three fine children: and even at the house, which was standing, they either knew nothing or did not mind me; whence concluding that the family had quitted the place, most likely to go on board ship, I was quite in despair what to do with myself, when Mr Joseph Hake, who was at some distance, astonished to hear the voice of a person he had been informed the preceding day was either dead or dying, called out in the greatest surprise to tell his father and mother, and came running immediately to me.

Mr Hake said that he had believed my case to be desperate, and therefore had wished most heartily to hear I was released from suffering. They received me in the most affectionate manner possible, which filled me with so much joy to be taken so much notice of, that I could not help telling Mr

Hake that I sincerely thanked God for lengthening out my days to die under his protection.

They carried me to a tent made of carpets under a vine-walk where their beds were placed, and gave me some strong white wine and bread and butter, at that time exquisite and refreshing to me; but they feared to give me as much as I would have desired. The two black boys I joyfully dismissed, equally pleased with eighteen shillings each.

Mr Hake sent for the King's farrier, who was also a famous bone-setter, then in the garden with his family. This man, with the help of a barber-surgeon, examined me immediately, and declared there was nothing broke but the arm; that all the rest were only wounds and bruises, and, if fever could be kept off, I might do very well again. They set my arm immediately, but did not perceive the dislocation of the shoulder, and my left side was at that time the most painful to me. Their opinion of me being more favourable than I could have expected from my outward appearance, I determined by patience to make up for the deficiencies of all the conveniences which another time might have afforded; yet about the middle of the night, when the family had laid themselves down to rest, my left side grew so bad that it almost took away my breath, and at the same time a benumbing coldness seizing me in my lame arm, I thought I had only a few moments to live; but, unwilling to disturb

their scanty repose, I did not speak, till Mr Hake, seeing my condition, called Mr Abraham Hake to my assistance, who setting me up, I recovered a little, and by bleeding the next morning was greatly relieved, and was forced to have application to this remedy four times more.

On the Tuesday Mr Scrafton the surgeon came to me with great difficulty from Belem; said he was almost pulled to pieces by the people, and, confirming the former opinion of my case, told me he was very glad to hear I had fallen into such good hands as he esteemed the bone-setter's to be.

Mr Hake from the first assured me of his assistance and protection, yet when I heard the clamour of the starving people for bread, threatening to break in upon us (so that we were forced to eat our victuals almost by stealth), as also the variety of reports of robberies and murders which were committed all around us, whilst all government was at an end, and at the same time the English were pressing him for his own safety to go on board ship, I expected every day necessity would force him to compliance, and should that happen I knew not whither to look with hope!

With what gratitude then did my heart overflow (a gratitude which no time can ever efface) to hear him declare, when earnestly entreated to go on board a ship of which he himself was an owner, and where there was a place reserved for him, that he could

not leave his family. On being told they would make room for his sons, he said he not only meant his sons but myself also, whom he could not abandon in so distressful a condition, and therefore it would be in vain to mention it any more to him. And indeed in every respect he most fully complied with his promise to me, carrying me on board the afore-mentioned ship on Saturday the 29th of November. The next day she sailed for England with twenty-four passengers, being the second ship after the earthquake,—the Expedition packet, Captain William Clies, having sailed about ten days before us with seventeen passengers.

It was constantly a most sensible increase of uneasiness to me to give so much trouble to Mr Hake's family at such a time of general confusion and distress, and I must ever acknowledge myself greatly indebted for my recovery to the particular care and attention of Mr Abraham Hake.

Thus far I have endeavoured not only to describe most minutely all the accidents that happened to me, but even the hopes and fears occasioned by them, whether depressed and magnified by my debilitated state of mind I know not. I can only say that after I got into the street the general distress painted in every ghastly countenance made but little reflection necessary to conclude that even the nearest relations would be unable to assist each other; and from the short examination I had made

of myself, I thought it was of little consequence to me, and therefore at once resolved, without a murmur, to resign myself to the will of the Supreme Governor of all things, humbly hoping, by my patience in suffering what He was pleased to inflict, to make some atonement for my faults.

How great, then, must be my thankfulness to Divine Providence for raising me up assistance, not only unasked, but even unhoped for, amongst people almost strangers to me, more especially Mr Jorg (with whom I had but a slight acquaintance), who, like a guardian angel, appeared always to assist me in the utmost extremities. He afterwards assured me that it gave him the greatest concern to be obliged to leave me in the manner he did; but that, finding all hopes of procuring a boat were vain, because the moment any came near to the shore they were immediately crowded with people who waited there on purpose, he resolved to get away himself in the same manner, and endeavoured to send me the first help he could procure: that accordingly, after crossing the river (which took them up a long time), he met with a Mr Bride, an English shoemaker, who was going over, and who, at his entreaty, promised to look for me, and carry me away with him; and that, after making the most diligent search for me without success, he rightly concluded I had been already removed thence. I have been the more particular to mention this cir-

cumstance, because it sets in its true light a behaviour I can never reflect on without the greatest surprise and astonishment, as well as the deepest sense of gratitude.

Some time afterwards, I learnt that no part of our house fell except the *arada* where I was, nor were any of the family killed; only the housekeeper and one man-servant were much hurt by the falling of the *arada* upon them as they were going out of the house. The ceilings of the upper storey were, however, so much shattered, that none ventured to enter into any of the rooms.

It is universally agreed that all the mischief proceeded from the first three shocks of the earthquake, which were attended with a tumbling sort of motion, like the waves of the sea, so that it was amazing the houses resisted so long as they did.

No place nor time could have been more unlucky for the miserable people! The city was full of narrow streets; the houses strong-built and high, so that their falling filled up all the passages; the day of All Saints, with the Portuguese a great holiday, when all the altars of the churches were lighted up with many candles, just at the time they were fullest of people! Most of the churches fell immediately. The streets were thronged with people going to and from mass, many of whom must have been destroyed by the mere falling of the upper parts of the houses.

It would be impossible to pretend justly to describe the universal horror and distress that everywhere prevailed! Many saved themselves by going upon the water, whilst others found there the death they hoped to have avoided. Some were wonderfully preserved by getting to the tops of their houses; more by retiring to the bottoms of them. Others, again, unhurt, were imprisoned under the ruins of their dwellings, only to be burnt alive! whilst two Dutchmen, in particular, were said to have escaped by the fire reaching the ruins of their house, and lighting them through passages they would not otherwise have found out. The earnest but unheeded supplications of the disabled, and the violent, noisy prayers of the people, who thought it to be the Day of Judgment, added to the general distraction. In short, death in every shape soon grew familiar to the eye.

The river is said to have risen and fallen several times successively in a most wonderful manner; at one time threatening to overflow the lower parts of the city, and directly afterwards leaving the ships almost aground in the middle of its bed, showing rocks that had never been seen before.

The duration of the first shock (which came without any warning, except a great noise heard by the people near the water-side) is variously reported, but by none is estimated at less than three minutes and a half. At the latter part of it (I suppose), I

was thrown over the wall, and fell about four stories, between the houses, where I must have lain but a little time, if it was the second shock that I felt in the Portuguese man's house—which was said to have happened at ten o'clock (though by some people it is confounded with the first). I almost think it could not have been the third that I felt at Mr Jorg's house; for as that took place at twelve o'clock, I must have remained a long time in the street, whereas it appeared to me that, instead of two hours, as it must have been if between the second and third shocks, I lay there scarcely a quarter of an hour.

Before I left Mr Jorg's house on the Saturday night about eleven o'clock, which was in the same street with ours, called Pedras Nagras, situated upon the hill leading up to the Castle, I saw all the middle part of the city to the King's Palace, and from thence up the opposite hill to us, leading to the Baira Alto, containing a number of parishes, all in one great blaze.

Three times I thought myself inevitably lost! The first, when I saw all the city moving like the water; the second, when I found myself shut up between four walls; and the third time, when, with that vast fire before me, I thought myself to be abandoned in Mr Jorg's house; and even in the square, where I remained the Saturday night and Sunday, the almost continual trembling of the

earth, as well as the sinking of the great stone quay adjoining to the square, at the third great shock at twelve o'clock (covered, as it was said, with three hundred people, or perhaps more justly with one hundred and fifty, who were endeavouring to get into boats, and were, boats and all, swallowed up, which was the reason so few boats ventured on the river for some time after), made me fearful lest the water had undermined the square, and that at every succeeding shock we should likewise sink; or else, as the ground was low, and even with the water, the least rising of it would overflow us. Full of these terrors, as well as the distresses already mentioned, it more than once occurred to me that the Inquisition, with all its utmost cruelty, could not have invented half such a variety of tortures for the mind as we were then suffering.

Had the general consternation been less, not only many lives, but even much property, might have been saved; for the fire did not, till the Saturday morning, reach the Custom-House, which stood next to the water-side, and had large open places on each side of it; so that great multitudes of bundles, which caused us so much distress, might easily have been saved by boats, as in some parts the fire was two days in getting to them. But the King's soldiers, amongst whom were many foreign deserters, instead of assisting the people, turned

plunderers, adding to the fires, as some before their execution confessed.

No fire came out of the ground, but the whole was occasioned by the fallen houses; nor were there any openings of the earth, unless the sinking of the quay was caused by one, but everywhere innumerable cracks, from many of which were thrown out water and sand.

The King sent directly to the nearest garrison for his troops, upon whose arrival order was restored; and the butchers and bakers dispersed about to provide for the people, who were not permitted to move farther from the city without passes. The common people were immediately forced by the soldiers with swords drawn to bury the dead bodies, the stench growing so noisome that bad consequences were apprehended from it. The judges were also dispersed about with orders to execute upon the spot all who were found guilty of murder or theft. It was said, before we left the place, that there were above eighty bodies hanging upon gibbets round about the city. Several of the ships were searched, and none were allowed to leave the harbour without permission.

All the heart of the city (the rich part of it) was burnt. The suburbs, which were very large, escaped, and have since been repaired. All the towns and villages round about suffered more or less. Setuval was not only thrown down and

burnt, but afterwards overflowed. The shock was strongly felt at Oporto, 150 miles to the northward, and even at Madrid, 300 miles from Lisbon.

Every place to the south suffered greatly. The royal palace and convent at Mafra were not thrown down, nor the grand aqueduct.

The royal family were at Belem, where they most commonly resided. It was said a large stone grazed the Queen's neck as she went down-stairs. None of them, however, were hurt.

The Portuguese from the first ran into two extremes; making the number of the inhabitants of their city to be much greater than it really was, and on the other hand as much diminishing that of the persons who perished. The former they insisted could not be so little as 350,000; but Mr Hake, from many years' residence in the place, thinks 250,000 to have been the outside; and the latter they were desirous of concealing for political reasons, therefore it is unlikely that the number will ever be known. In one of their best accounts since published, it is calculated at about 15,000; but Mr John Bristow, junior, has told me that he had from the very best authority (as I imagine, the Secretary of State), that the number of the dead found and buried was twenty-two thousand and some hundreds; in which case, as there must have remained a yet larger number under the ruins, the

computation would be moderate at 50,000 people lost by the earthquake.

There were sixty-nine British subjects killed on that occasion, most of whom were Irish Roman Catholics. Only about twelve or thirteen English out of three hundred—a most moderate number in proportion to the general loss. This, I suppose, was greatly owing (next to the divine Providence) to the distance they were at from the streets, where the destruction was almost over before they could arrive.

Mrs Hake, sister to Sir Charles Hardy, was killed by the falling of the front of her own house, after she had got into the street. Her body was found under the rubbish three months after, not at all changed.

It is inconceivable as well as inexpressible the joy it gave us to meet with one another, each thinking the other in a manner to be risen from the dead, and all having wonderful escapes to relate, all equally satisfied to have preserved their lives only, without desiring anything further. But soon, this first joyful impression passing away, and cares and necessities making themselves felt, many, on considering their utterly destitute condition, almost regretted that the same stroke had not deprived them of life which had stripped them of all means of existence.

As for the Portuguese, they were entirely em-

ployed in a kind of religious madness, lugging about saints without heads or limbs, telling one another how they met with such misfortunes; and if by any chance they espied a bigger, throwing their own aside, they hauled away the greater weight of holiness, kissing those of each other that they encountered; whilst their clergy declared that the earthquake was a judgment on them for their wickedness—some saying because they had shown so much favour to heretics; and, going in a tumultuous manner to Court, declared that was the cause of their present sufferings. They almost thought it impious to try to take care of themselves, and called it fighting against heaven—particularly in the case of an officer upon guard at the Mint, who, with the greatest courage and resolution, remained there three days, and by knocking down the buildings round about it, preserved it from the fire. However, the King rewarded him as his merits highly deserved.

At last a miracle (performed, as was supposed, by a secret order from the Court) brought them tolerably to their senses. In the middle of the night the Virgin Mary was seen sitting amongst flames of fire, waving a white handkerchief to the people from the ruins of a church or famous convent of hers, called Our Lady of Pentrade Franca, situated upon the top of a very high hill. This was immediately declared to be a forgiveness

of their past offences, and a promise of life. However, notwithstanding this, we had many prophecies of destruction several times afterwards.

It is remarkable that the bull feast, celebrated two months before the earthquake, in a great square called the Boccio, made an old blind prophecy of great mischief to happen to Lisbon, in a year with two fires in it, to be much talked of; because, some hundreds of years before, in the same square, upon a like occasion, the scaffolds fell and killed great numbers of people. The fear, therefore, that something of that sort would happen then to accomplish the prophecy, prevented many from going to the first day's spectacle.

It was said that the Queen of Spain immediately sent her brother a large remittance in cash, and that the King wrote a letter with his own hand, not only offering his treasures and troops, but to come himself in person if necessary. The French also made some very trifling offers. But the Portuguese people of all denominations fixed their hopes upon England from the very first, most confidently expecting to receive all manner of assistance from thence. Nor would they have been much deceived, had the winds proved as favourable as the intentions of the English.

SOME ONE PAYS.

BY CHARLES LEVER.

CHAPTER I.

"BRINDISI, *August.*

"DEAR HARRY,—Our plans are all formed. We start from this on Tuesday for Corfu, where we have secured a small cutter of some thirty tons, by which we mean to drop down the Albanian coast, making woodcocks our object on all the days pigs do not offer. We are four—Gerard, Hope, Lascelles, and myself—of whom you know all but Lascelles, but are sure to like when you meet him. We want you, and will take no refusal. Hope declares on his honour that he will never pay you a hundred you lent him if you fail us; and he will—which is more remarkable still—book up the day you join us. Seriously, however, I entreat you to be one of us. Take no trouble about guns, &c. We are amply provided. We only ask yourself. Yours ever,

"GEORGE OGLE.

"If you cannot join at Corfu, we shall rendezvous at Prevesa, a little town on the Turkish side, where you can address us, to the care of the Vice-consul Lydyard."

This note reached me one day in the late autumn, while I was sojourning at the Lamm, at Innspruck. It had followed me from Paris to Munich, to Baden, the Ammergau, and at last overtook me at Innspruck, some four weeks after it had been written. If I was annoyed at the delay which lost me such a pleasant companionship, for three of the four were old friends, a glance at the postscript reconciled me at once to the disappointment—Prevesa, and the name Lydyard, awoke very sad memories; and I do not know what would have induced me to refresh them by seeing either again. It is not a story, nor is it a scene, that I am about to relate. It is one of those little incidents which are ever occurring through life, and which serve to remind us how our moral health, like our physical, is the sport of accident; and that just as the passing breeze may carry on its breast a pleurisy, the chance meetings in the world may be scarcely less fatal!

I have been an idler and a wanderer for years. I left the army after a short experience of military life, imagining that I could not endure the restraints of discipline, and slowly discovered afterwards that there is no such slavery as an untrammelled will,

and that the most irksome bondage is nothing in comparison with the vacillations and uncertainties of a purposeless existence.

I was left early in life my own master, with no relatives except distant ones, and with means, not exactly ample, but quite sufficient for the ordinary needs of a gentleman. I was free to go anywhere or do anything, which, in my case at least, meant to be everlastingly projecting and abandoning—now determining on some pursuit that should give me an object or a goal in life, and now assuring myself that all such determinations were slaveries, and that to conform to the usages by which men sought success in public or professional life was an ignoble drudgery, and unworthy of him who could live without it.

In this unsettled frame of mind I travelled about the world for years—at first over the cognate parts of the Continent, with which I became thoroughly familiar—knowing Rome, Paris, Vienna, and Naples, as I knew London. I then ran all over the States, crossing the Rocky Mountains, and spending above a year on the Pacific coast. I visited China and India. I came—I will not say home, for I have none—by Constantinople, and thence to Belgrade, where I made the acquaintance of a Turkish Pacha, then governor of Scutari in Albania, and returned along with him to his seat of government. A Vice-Governor of Prevesa induced me to go back with

him to that unpromising spot, assuring me how easy I should always find means of reaching Corfu or Italy; and that, meanwhile, the quail-shooting, which was then beginning, would amply reward me for my stay.

Prevesa was about as wretched a village as poverty, sloth, and Turkish indifference could accomplish. The inhabitants, who combined trade and fishing ostensibly, really lived by smuggling, and only needed the opportunity to be brigands on shore. Their wretched "bazaar" displayed only the commonest wares of Manchester or Glasgow, with Belgian cutlery or cheap imitation jewellery. But even these had no buyers; and the little stir and life of the place was in the *cafés*, where the brawny natives, armed to the teeth, smoked and lounged the livelong day, and, to all seeming, fulfilled no other duty in existence.

I suspect I have an actual liking for dreary and tiresome places. I believe they somehow accommodate themselves to a something in my temperament which is not misanthropy, nor mental depression, nor yet romance, but is compounded of all three. I feel, besides, that my imagination soars the more freely the fewer the distractions that surround me; but that I require just that small amount of stimulant human life and its daily cares suggest to prevent stagnation.

I was at least six days at Prevesa before I was aware that her Britannic Majesty had a representa-

tive there. It was in a chance ramble down a little alley that led to the bay I came upon the British arms over a low doorway. It was a very poor-looking tumble-down house, with a very frail wooden balcony over the door, distinguished by a flagstaff, to be doubtless decorated on occasion by the proud flag of England.

Framing I forget what imaginary reason for inquiry, I entered and knocked at a door inscribed "Consular hours from——" and then a smudge of paint obliterating the rest and leaving the import in doubt. Not receiving any answer to my summons, I pushed open the door and entered. A man in his shirt-sleeves and slippers was asleep on a very dirty sofa, and so soundly that my entrance did not disturb him. A desk with some much-worn books and scattered papers, a massive leaden inkstand, and a large official seal, were in front of him; but a paper of Turkish tobacco, and a glass of what smelt to be gin, were also present, and from the flushed cheek and heavy breathing of the sleeper, appeared to have been amongst his latest occupations.

It is not necessary I should record our conversation. In his half-waking and not all sober state he had mistaken me for a British sailor who had been left behind somewhere, and was importuning to be sent on to England, but whose case evidently had inspired scant sympathy.

"I'll not do it!" grumbled out the Consul, with his eyes more than half closed. "You were drunk, or a deserter—I don't care which. My instructions are positive, and you may go to the d—— for me. There now, that's your answer, and you'll not get any other if you stayed there till dusk."

"I suspect you mistake me, sir," said I, mildly. "I am a traveller, and an English gentleman."

"I hate gentlemen, and I don't love travellers," said he, in the same drowsy voice as before.

"Sorry for that, but must ask you all the same if my passport permits me to go into Italy?"

"Of course it does. What sort of traveller are you that does not know that much, and that if you wanted a *visa*, it's the Italian should give it, and there's no Italian or Frenchman here. There's no one here but a Prussian, Strantopsky—d—— his eyes—good morning;" and he again turned his face to the wall. I cannot say what curiosity prompted me to continue our little-promising conversation, but there was something so strange in the man's manner at moments—something that seemed to indicate a very different condition from the present—that I determined at all hazards to linger on.

"I don't suppose the sight of a countryman can be a very common event in these regions," said I, "and I might almost hope it was not an unpleasant one!"

"Who told you that, my good fellow?" said he, with more animation than before. "Who said that it gave me any peculiar pleasure to see one of those people that remind me of other times and very different habits?"

"At all events I, as an individual, cannot open these ungracious recollections, for I never saw you before,—I do not even now know your name."

"The F. O. list has the whole biography. 'Thomas Gardner Lydyard, educated at All Souls, Oxford, where he took first-class in classics and law; was appointed cornet in the 2d Life Guards, 6th —— 18—; sent with Lord Raycroft's Mission to Denmark to invest His Christian Majesty with the insignia of the Most Noble Order of the Garter. Contested Marcheston, —— 18—, and was returned on a petition.' I'll finish what's not in the book—backed Queen Mab at seven to two—got a regular cropper — had to bolt, and live three years in Sweden—took to corn-brandy and strong cavendish, and ended as you see—V.C. at Prevesa. Is not that a brilliant ending for a youth of promise? do you remember in your experience, as a man of travel, that you can match it?"

By this time he had risen to the sitting posture, and with his hair rudely pushed back by his hands, and his face grown red with passion, looked as fierce and passionate as high excitement could make a man.

"I've heard your name very often," said I, calmly; "Close and St John used to talk of you constantly; and I remember Moresby saying you were the best rider of a flat race amongst the gentlemen of England."

"I was better, ten times better, across country. I could get more out of my horse than any of the so-called steeplechase-riders; and as I seldom punished, the betting men never knew when my horse was distressed. Close could have told you that. Did he ever tell you that I was the best cricketer at Lord's? What's that?" cried he, suddenly, as a small door at the end of the room opened and closed again, almost instantly. "Oh, it's dinner!—I suppose if I had any shame I should say luncheon, for it's only two o'clock, not to say that the meal itself will have small pretensions to be called a dinner. Will you come and look at it?"

There was nothing very hearty in the invitation, as little was there any courtesy; but the strange contrast of this man's shabby exterior, and the tone in which of a sudden he had burst out to speak, excited an intense curiosity in me to see more of him; and though I was not without some scruple as to my right to be there at all, I followed him as we walked into the inner room.

A young girl, whose pale careworn face and gentle look struck me more than the elegance of

features I afterwards recognised, curtsied slightly as we entered.

"A distressed B. S., Marion," said the Consul, introducing me; "my daughter, sir—I'm not aware of your name."

"Lowther."

"Lowther, then—Mr Lowther, Miss Lydyard; that's the regular form, I believe. Sit down and let us have our soup;" and as he spoke he proceeded to ladle out a smoky compound in which rice and fragments of lamb were freely mingled.

"This is all you will get for dinner, Mr Lowther, and so secure what solids come to your share; and here is such wine as we drink here. It comes from Patras, and has its fine flavour of resin."

I ate and drank freely, and talked away about the place and the people, and at last induced my host to speak of himself and his own habits. He fished and shot, he said, some years before, but he had given up both; he also had an Arab nag or two, but he sold them—in fact, as time wore on, he had abandoned everything like pastime or amusement, and now droned away life in a semi-stupor, or between gin and sleep.

"Capital fellows these Albanian brutes for letting a man have his way. No one asks how you live, or with whom. The hogs in a stye are not less troubled with a public opinion. Except once that the Pacha sent me an offer for Marion, I don't know

that I have ever had a State communication since I took up my post."

The young girl's face flushed crimson, but she never spoke, nor had I yet heard the sound of her voice.

"My Russian colleague," continued he, with a savage laugh, "grew half terrified at the thought of my influence here if my daughter became a Sultana, and got some fellow to write a letter in a Paris newspaper to denounce the British intrigue, and declare that I had become a Mussulman: and the F. O. people wrote out to me to inquire if it were true; and I replied that, as I had not owned a hat for five-and-thirty years, I wore a turban when I went out, but as that was an event that didn't happen above twice or thrice a-year, they needn't mind it, and that if her Majesty made a point of it, I'd not go out any more.

"After that the official fellows, who seemed to have forgotten me before, never gave me any peace —asking for returns of this and reports of that. How many piastres the Pacha gave his cook—how many kids went to a pilaff—how many wives to small harem—what was the least a man could live on in the English service—and whether keeping men poor and on the prowl was not a sure measure to secure them of an inquiring and inquisitive disposition.

"I take it, they must have liked my despatches,

for not a month passed that they did not poke me up. At last there came a young fellow this way; he was on a walk down to Thessaly, he said, to see Mount Olympus; he hurt his foot, and he stayed here several weeks, and he wrote them a despatch in my name, and said what a stunning fine thing it would be to make all this country and the Epirus Greek; and that we should checkmate the Russians by erecting a rival State and a heterodox Church, and I don't know what else. He got up his Greek theology from Marion, here—her mother was from Attica—and he made believe that he knew all the dogmas."

I stole a look at Marion, but as quickly withdrew it, for she was deadly pale, and looked as if about to faint.

"Marion knows," continued he, "all the fine reasons he gave for the policy, and how it was not to be confounded with what the Greeks call the *Grande Idée*—no Byzantian *renaissance* humbug at all, but some sort of protectorate State, with England, France, and Italy, I think, as the protecting Powers; and, in fact, he got to be so plausible, and quoted such marvellous names, that F. O. rose to the bait, and asked to have further information; but, by that time, he had gone away, and we never saw more of him."

The young girl rocked to and fro in her chair, and fearing she would fall off in a faint, I half

arose to catch her, when a look so imploringly sad as to go to my heart arrested me, and I sat still, and to avert attention from her, asked the Consul some questions as to the value of the project he had written about.

"I suppose it was about as wise as such things generally are," continued he; "it may have had its little grain of sense somewhere, and all its disadvantages required time to develop. He was a shrewd sort of fellow that William Hope—that was his name; he borrowed twenty pounds of me, and he sent it back too, and a very pretty writing-desk to Marion, and a box of books; and he said he'd come back some fine day and see us, but he has apparently forgotten that, and it's now two years and a half we have never heard of him. Is it not, Marion?"

"Two years and eight months," said she, calmly; but her lips trembled in spite of her.

I was not sorry when our chiboucks were introduced, and the young girl had a fair pretext to steal away; for I saw with what a struggle she was controlling her emotion, and what a relief it would be to her to escape notice.

The Consul was so pleased to have any opportunity to relieve his mind that he talked away for hours, and of his most intimate concerns. In inveighing against the hard lot that sentenced his wearing out his last years of life in such a place,

he told me his whole history. There was but one point of any doubt; whether Marion's mother had been a wedded wife or not, I could not discover. She was dead some years, and he spoke of her with more feeling than he seemed well capable of showing. She had died of that peculiar form of disease which is found in the low-lying lands of Greece, and the seeds of the disorder he had already detected in Marion. "There is a little short cough, without effort, but when I hear it, it goes to my heart," said he, "for I know well that there lurks an enemy nothing can dislodge. You hear it now, listen!" cried he—and he held up his hands to impose silence, but I heard nothing.

I sat on till evening, chatting as smokers will do in that broken and unconnected fashion that admits of anything being taken up, and as lightly abandoned. There was not a little to interest in a man whose mere incongruity with his station imparted a strange turn to all his opinions and judgments, and who even in his banishment tried to follow the events of a world he was destined never to share in. For many a year he had thought of nothing but how to escape from this dreary spot—to exchange with any one and for anything; but now with something like a dread of civilisation he hugged himself in the thought of his exile, where he could be as barbarous, as neglectful, and as degenerate as he pleased.

Of this same savagery one trait will suffice to indicate the extent. Prevesa was formerly a yacht station, where men frequently came in the woodcock season or for the quails; but a terrible brigand outrage, in which two Germans and an English naval officer were killed, put an end to all such visits. Lydyard declared that he never regretted an incident that freed him from all intrusion of strangers, and averred that he at least owed a debt of gratitude to the Klephts.

When I wished him good-night he was far too deep in the gin-flask to make his words impressive; but as he told me he'd like me to come up often and sit with him, I determined to accept his invitation so long as I lingered in the neighbourhood.

CHAPTER II.

I stayed on five weeks at Prevesa, for though I gave my evenings to the Consul, I passed every morning with Marion. I never saw a girl whose society had the same charm for me. Heaven knows there could scarcely have been so dreary a spot, nor one where life had fewer pleasures; but there seemed a capacity for enjoyment in her mind, which, whether for sun or sky or shore, for breezy mountain or dark nestling wood, could extract its own delight and be happy.

I had seen enough even on the first day I met her to be aware that Hope had not made a merely passing impression upon her heart, and I was cautious to avoid all that might revive the memory of his name. This reserve on my part seemed actually at length too much for her patience, for in one of our long walks she suddenly asked me if I had never known him.

"No," replied I, "never; and I have been guardedly careful not to ask you about one of whose intimacy with you I feel jealous."

"How do you mean jealous?" asked she, turning on me those large full eyes that reminded of the Homeric simile, the "ox-eyed."

"Perhaps my word was ill chosen," said I, in some confusion; "but what I tried to convey was the discomfiture I felt on thinking that there had been one who walked with you where we are walking, and whose words, it might be, interested you as much, or more, than mine."

"Yes, it is true," said she, softly.

"Which is true?" asked I, in a low voice.

"That he loved me!" said she, in the same unaltered tone.

"And you——;" but I caught myself at once, and, shocked at the ungenerous daring, turned it off by saying, "I should like to hear more of him; tell me what you know of his history or belongings."

"I know nothing, except that he was poor as

ourselves; that whatever he should become in life must be his own achievement; that he was friendless and alone."

"He was a gentleman?" said I, inquiring.

"Was he not a gentleman! Was not every word, every opinion he uttered, the soul of honour and high feeling! When he spoke of what he read, he knew how to praise all that was noble, and truthful, and worthy, and to decry whatever was ignoble or mean. When he helped a beggar on the road, he gave his alms like one whose happier fortune it was to aid a brother, and who might himself accept assistance to-morrow. And so through all he did, the world seemed like some flowery meadow, where, if we would, we might stroll or stretch at ease, each happy with each."

"Was he ambitious?"

"If you mean of honour, fame, and good repute, yes, as I never heard of any one; but of that success that includes wealth and state, luxurious living, and the rest of it, he could not have been, for he has said over and over at our homely board, 'This is indeed what delights me! It is here I begin to feel how unworthy are the vulgar slaveries rich men submit to.'"

"He had, then, some experiences of the life he censured?"

"I don't know that he had, except from hearsay; but he had read, and conversed almost as much as he had read."

"Had he served as a soldier?"

"No, he could not bear any settled career; he called it a bondage, and that all men who followed any distinct calling lost their identity in the craft: he would laughingly say, 'they become smaller than women.'"

"He loved you very much, Marion, and——"

"Why has he not returned?" said she, as her eyes flashed fiercely. "Say out your words, or if you have no courage for them, let me say them. It was this you would have asked."

"I had not any right."

"Of course you had not, but I will give the right, that I may shame the questioner. If he has not come back, will you be prepared to say he may not come to-morrow? this very night? At first in every footfall on the road, in every voice I heard — I have grown wiser now, and I can wait."

"Such trustfulness honours you," said I, thoughtfully.

"It is no more than what I owe him. There, look there!" said she,—"there is a Levanter coming in already, and but a moment back that sea was like a mirror! Is not life just such another ocean, and can he who plans a voyage be more certain of his weather? How can I know what difficulties he is now combating, what barriers oppose him?"

"I should be glad to feel that some one would, one day, trust *me* in that fashion."

"So she will, if you inspire her with the same love. A woman's heart can be as good or as bad as you like to make it: she has but the keeping of it—the culture is another's."

This was the tone of many a conversation we had together, through all of which I could gather how a girl of a strong will and an untried nature had been gradually moulded to opinions so new and strange to her by one whose temperament and character were stronger than her own.

That she loved him with her whole heart—that she felt towards him that almost worship with which a fervid imagination will inspire its object of devotion—was clear enough. But I own that my greater anxiety was to learn, if I could, who was this man, what was he, and how came he here? It was not difficult to believe that even a man of culture and refinement might have fallen in love with this girl. She was, with certain traits of delicate health and pallor, of great beauty; her large lustrous eyes, more expressive from the dark colour of the orbits round them, could change from a melting softness to a glance of wild defiance; and her mouth, of which the teeth inclined slightly inwards, had a character of winning sweetness there was no resisting. Her figure might be called faultless; all I had ever seen of statuesque in symmetry

was realised in that lithe and graceful form, which, even under the coarse drapery she wore, betrayed in every pose and movement the perfection of form. And just as the conscious grace of the beautiful woman blended with the bounding elasticity of the happy girl, so in temperament she united all the thoughtful moods of a reflective mind with the fresh, wild impulses of the child.

"I know," said she to me one day, "I see it; you are puzzled about William Hope."

"I own it," said I, half sorrowfully.

"And you cannot imagine how this man of refinement—this creature of gifts and graces, this eminent *gentleman*, for I know your comprehensive phrase—could have loved such as *me*."

"Far from it, Marion; my wonder is how he could tear himself away from you, even for a season."

"That was duty."

"But what kind of duty? He had no ties—no cares of any calling; you say he had no relatives to dictate to him: how could he explain a necessity where there was no pressure?"

"What he said was enough for me. And," added she, after a pause, "it would have been a bolder than either you or me would have dared to question him."

This chance speech explained in full the ascendancy that his more powerful nature had gained over

her, and how it was easier to her to believe than to distrust him.

"Does *he* write to you?"

"No."

"Nor you to *him*?"

"No; he did not ask it!"

"And still you know he will come back?"

"I know it;" and she nodded twice, with a little smile that seemed to say how assured she felt in the avowal.

If there seems scant delicacy in the way I dared to question her, let me hasten to say that our intimacy warranted the freedom, which her manner besides invited; for I have not given here the details of those conversations that occurred between us, nor told how we were led on from word to word to closest confessions.

Strange girl in every way! she would suffer me to walk with my arm around her waist, and yet would fire indignantly if I dared to call her "Marion mou," as in Greek phrase Hope had called her.

Anything more hopeless than the attempt to gain her affections I could not imagine; but the conviction, strong as it was, did not save me from feeling desperately in love with her. In honest fact, the glimpses I had caught of her nature, when revealing to me her love for another, had completely enraptured me; her warm fidelity, her unswerving faith, and her sustaining pride in the

man she loved, needed less loveliness than hers to make her a prize to be striven for.

And so it was, I did love her, dreamed of her by night and canvassed in my mind by day what way to win her. There was not living a man who had less count to render to his fellows than myself; I was actually without kith or kin or belongings of any kind. That I should marry a girl in the humblest condition was purely my own affair. There was not one to question me; but, above all this and beyond it, I owned the one great difficulty, how should I gain her love? The very mode in which my intimacy with her had been effected would make it a sort of treason were I to try to win her affections; and I could fancy that scornful banter in which she would meet my addresses, and ask me what sort of memory was mine? I could picture her raillery too on the nature that could deliberately raise its hopes on the foundation of affection laid by another, and make what, to an honest mind, would be jealousy, minister to his own passion.

It was all true, and except some advantages of a purely worldly kind, and for which I knew she would have little value, I had nothing in my favour. The only question then that remained was, should I better break the spell that was on me by incurring a distinct refusal; or should I fly at once, and leave the place for ever?

The latter seemed the wiser resolve, and I came to it as I slowly walked homeward to my inn at night. Instead of going to bed I sent for the landlord, and engaged with him to furnish me horses and a guide to anywhere on the coast by which I might take shipping for Italy or the shores of the Adriatic. There was a return caravan with a strong armed party bound for Salonica to start at midnight. I made my bargain, and within two hours after was on the road.

I have little more to add. We were nearly three weeks on the way, and I was thoroughly exhausted, weather-worn, and very ragged, when I entered at nightfall that dirty seaport which I am now told is to become the greatest commercial mart of the Levant. One of the first sights that struck me as I came in was a party of yacht sailors with the word "Marmion" on their glazed habits.

The Marmion was the crack yacht of Cowes—the fastest cutter, it was supposed, ever built, and lately bought by the Duke of R——, whom I had known intimately at All Souls. Having learned that he was bound for the Piræus, I sent off a few lines, asking, if not utterly inconvenient, that he would give me a passage to Greece.

A letter from the Duke, with a most cordial invitation, answered me within an hour. He was on his wedding-tour, and had a small party of friends, but ample room, and a hearty welcome for me.

If I were painting a picture *de genre*, I might linger to sketch some of the scenes, and one or two of the characters, of that yacht party; but though there was a very pretty and attractive bride, and more than one bridesmaid of striking beauty, and some half-dozen very assiduous young men of great fascination and faultless costume, I was too much under the shadow of my late discomfiture to emerge into the broad sunlight of their gay converse.

"What is the matter with you?" said R—— to me one night, as we walked the deck alone; "I never saw you before in such low spirits."

I made some pretext of health, and changed the theme, when he asked me where I had been, and how I had come to that little-visited spot—Salonica.

"As for that," I said, "I have been sojourning in scores of places not fit to compare with it; places you never so much as heard of — Yanina, Arta, Corstatacu, and Prevesa."

"Prevesa! the little bay opposite Corfu?"

"Yes; how do you know it?"

"Because I passed three months there. It was in that little dreary fishing village where I lived on sardines and boiled rice. I wrote a marvellous State paper, that the fellows at F. O. used to say made it a crying shame for me to leave diplomacy. I was then attached to my uncle's Embassy at Constantinople."

"What year was that?"

"In 18—. I seldom can recall a date, but I have a clue to this one." He paused for some seconds and added—"There was a good-looking girl there that I 'spooned' and got very fond of too. That's the confounded part of those barbarous places. It is not only the onions and the black bread you get used to, but you conform to the women too, and if you remain over-long you end by marrying one of them. Shake your head, old fellow, but it might happen all the same." He paused for a moment or two, gave a faint sigh, and then, with a sort of shake, like one throwing off a load, said—"Come down below and let's have a glass of brandy-and-water."

SIR TRAY: AN ARTHURIAN IDYL.

THE widowed dame of Hubbard's ancient line
Turned to her cupboard, cornered anglewise
Betwixt this wall and that, in quest of aught
To satisfy the craving of Sir Tray,
Prick-eared companion of her solitude,
Red-spotted, dirty-white, and bare of rib,
Who followed at her high and pattering heels,
Prayer in his eye, prayer in his slinking gait,
Prayer in his pendulous pulsating tail.
Wide on its creaking jaws revolved the door,
The cupboard yawned, deep-throated, thinly set
For teeth, with bottles, ancient canisters,
And plates of various pattern, blue or white;
Deep in the void she thrust her hookèd nose
Peering near-sighted for the wished-for bone,
Whiles her short robe of samite, tilted high,
The thrifty darnings of her hose revealed;—
The pointed feature travelled o'er the delf

Greasing its tip, but bone or bread found none.
Wherefore Sir Tray abode still dinnerless,
Licking his paws beneath the spinning-wheel,
And meditating much on savoury meats.

Meanwhile the Dame in high-backed chair reposed
Revolving many memories, for she gazed
Down from her lattice on the self-same path
Whereby Sir Lancelot 'mid the reapers rode
When Arthur held his court in Camelot,
And she was called the Lady of Shalott;
And, later, where Sir Hubbard, meekest knight
Of all the Table Round, was wont to pass,
And to her casement glint the glance of love.
(For all the tale of how she floated dead
Between the city walls, and how the Court
Gazed on her corpse, was of illusion framed,
And shadows raised by Merlin's magic art,
Ere Vivien shut him up within the oak.)
There stood the wheel whereat she spun her thread;
But of the magic mirror nought remained
Save one small fragment on the mantelpiece,
Reflecting her changed features night and morn.
But now the inward yearnings of Sir Tray
Grew pressing, and in hollow rumbling spake,
As in tempestuous nights the Northern seas
Within their caverned cliffs reverberate.
This touched her: "I have marked of yore," she said,

"When on my palfrey I have paced along
The streets of Camelot, while many a knight
Ranged at my rein and thronged upon my steps,
Wending in pride towards the tournament,
A wight who many kinds of bread purveyed—
Muffins, and crumpets, matutinal rolls,
And buns which, buttered, soothe at evensong;
To him I'll hie me ere my purpose cool,
And swift returning, bear a loaf with me,
And (for my teeth be tender grown, and like
Celestial visits, few and far between)
The crust shall be for Tray, the crumb for me."
This spake she; from their peg reached straightway down
Her cloak of sanguine hue, and pointed hat
From the flat brim upreared like pyramid
On sands Egyptian where the Pharaohs sleep,
Her ebon-handled staff (sole palfrey now)
Grasped firmly, and so issued swiftly forth;
Yet ere she closed the latch her cat Elaine,
The lily kitten reared at Astolat,
Slipt through and mewing passed to greet Sir Tray.

Returning ere the shadows eastward fell,
She placed a porringer upon the board,
And shred the crackling crusts with liberal hand,
Nor noted how Elaine did seem to wail,
Rubbing against her hose, and mourning round
Sir Tray, who lay all prone upon the hearth.

Then on the bread she poured the mellow milk—
"Sleep'st thou?" she said, and touched him with
her staff;
"What, ho! thy dinner waits thee!" But Sir Tray
Stirred not nor breathed: thereat, alarmed, she
seized
And drew the hinder leg: the carcase moved
All over wooden like a piece of wood—
"Dead?" said the Dame, while louder wailed
Elaine;
"I see," she said, "thy fasts were all too long,
Thy commons all too short, which shortened thus
Thy days, tho' thou mightst still have cheered
mine age
Had I but timelier to the city wonned.
Thither I must again, and that right soon,
For now 'tis meet we lap thee in a shroud,
And lay thee in the vault by Astolat,
Where faithful Tray shall by Sir Hubbard lie."

Up a by-lane the Undertaker dwelt;
There day by day he plied his merry trade,
And all his undertakings undertook:
Erst knight of Arthur's Court, Sir Waldgrave hight,
A gruesome carle who hid his jests in gloom,
And schooled his lid to counterfeit a tear.
With cheerful hammer he a coffin tapt,
While hollow, hollow, hollow, rang the wood,
And, as he sawed and hammered, thus he sang:

Wood, hammer, nails, ye build a house for him,
Nails, hammer, wood, ye build a house for me,
Paying the rent, the taxes, and the rates.

I plant a human acorn in the ground,
And therefrom straightway springs a goodly tree,
Budding for me in bread and beer and beef.

O Life, dost thou bring Death or Death bring thee?
Which of the twain is bringer, which the brought?
Since men must die that other men may live.

O Death, for me thou plump'st thine hollow cheeks,
Mak'st of thine antic grin a pleasant smile,
And prank'st full gaily in thy winding-sheet.

Yet am I but the henwife's favourite chick,
Pampered but doomed; and, in the sequel sure,
Death will the Undertaker overtake.

This ditty sang he to a doleful tune
To outer ears that sounded like a dirge,
Or wind that wails across the fields of death.
'Ware of a visitor, he ceased his strain,
But still did ply his saw industrious.
With withered hand on ear, Dame Hubbard stood;
"Vex not mine ears," she grated, "with thine old

And creaking saw!" "I deemed," he said, and sighed,
"Old saws might please thee, as they should the wise."
"Know," said the Dame, "Sir Tray that with me dwelt
Lies on my lonely hearthstone stark and stiff;
Wagless the tail that waved to welcome me."—
Here Waldgrave interposed sepulchral tones,
"Oft have I noted, when the jest went round,
Sad 'twas to see the wag forget his tale—
Sadder to see the tail forget its wag."
"Wherefore," resumed she, "take of fitting stuff,
And make therewith a narrow house for him."
Quoth he, "From yonder deal I'll plane the bark,
So 'twill of Tray be emblematical;
For thou, 'tis plain, must lose a deal of bark,
Since he nor bark nor bite shall practise more."
"And take thou, too," she said, "a coffin-plate,
And be his birth and years inscribed thereon
With letters twain 'S. T.' to mark Sir Tray,
So shall the tomb be known in after-time."
"This too," quoth Waldgrave, "shall be deftly done;
Oft hath the plate been freighted with his bones,
But now his bones must lie beneath the plate."
"Jest'st thou?" Dame Hubbard said, and clutched her crutch,
For ill she brooked light parlance of the dead;
But when she saw Sir Waldgrave, how his face

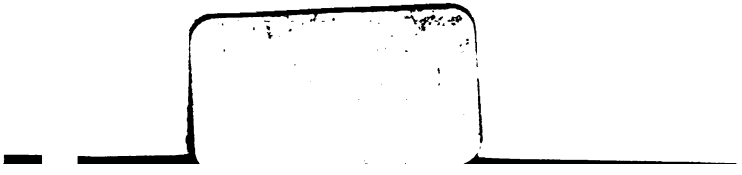
Was all drawn downward, till the curving mouth
A horseshoe seemed, while o'er the furrowed cheek
A wandering tear stole on, like rivulet
In dry ravine down mother Ida's side,
She changed her purpose, smote not, lowered the staff;—
So parted, faring homeward with her grief.

Nearing her bower, it seemed a sepulchre
Sacred to memory, and almost she thought
A dolorous cry arose, as if Elaine
Did sound a caterwauling requiem.
With hesitating hand she raised the latch,
And on the threshold with reluctant foot
Lingered, as loath to face the scene of woe,
When lo! the body lay not on the hearth,
For there Elaine her flying tail pursued,—
In the Dame's chair Sir Tray alive did sit,
A world of merry meaning in his eye,
And all his face agrin from ear to ear.

Like one who late hath lost his dearest friend,
And in his sleep doth see that friend again,
And marvels scarce to see him, putting forth
A clasping hand, and feels him warm with life,
And so takes up his friendship's broken thread—
Thus stood the Dame, thus ran she, pattering o'er
The sanded tiles, and clasped she thus Sir Tray,

Unheeding of the grief his jest had wrought
For joy he was not numbered with the dead.

Anon the Dame, her primal transports o'er,
Bethought her of the wisdom of Sir Tray,
And his fine wit, and then it shameful seemed
That he bareheaded 'neath the sky should go
While empty skulls of fools went thatched and roofed;
"A hat," she cried, "would better fit those brows
Than many a courtier's that I've wotted of;
And thou shalt have one, an' my tender toes
On which the corns do shoot, and these my knees
Wherethro' rheumatic twinges swiftly dart,
May bear me to the city yet again,
And thou shalt wear the hat as Arthur wore
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship."
Whereat Sir Tray did seem to smile, and smote
Upon the chair-back with approving tail.

Then up she rose, and to the Hatter's went,—
"Hat me," quoth she, "your very newest hat;"
And so they hatted her, and she returned
Home through the darksome wold, and raised the latch,
And marked, full lighted by the ingle-glow,
Sir Tray, with spoon in hand, and cat on knee,
Spattering the mess about the chaps of Puss.

E. B. H.